

Unit 1

FAMILY

Family isn't about whose blood you have. It's about who you care about. ♣ Trey Parker & Matt Stone

Grandparents are a link between your past and present. Grandchildren are your link between your present and future. ♣ Author Unknown

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What does family mean to you?
2. What makes a family happy and functioning?
3. How do you imagine your future life partner?

A family is a social unit, consisting of a mother, father and children who share certain **goals** and **values** and live together in one home. It is the most important social group. The family as an institution provides protection, education, socialisation, **care for** the aged, sick or **disabled**. It also supplies basic physical, economic and emotional security for its members. Therefore, it **fulfils** a biological, sociological, emotional, economical and educational **function** in modern society. A functioning family shows a strong relationship between its members. Human **needs**, such as love, protection, responsibility and **support**, are fulfilled there. The English proverb "*In time of test, family is best*" summarises best the role of the family.

One automatically becomes a family member immediately after being born. However, there are some exceptions. **Orphans** and **abandoned** children grow up in **orphanages** and **foster homes** where they get love from non-biological parents and **siblings**. There are charity organisations that look for parents who would like to adopt such children. Adopting a child is a very long process. Couples have to go through different checks on their origin, age, financial situation, relationships, living conditions etc.

All family members have specific social roles with various **duties** and **responsibilities**. **Domestic chores**, such as cooking, shopping, cleaning, should not be **assigned** only to women. In modern countries, boys are normally expected to help from childhood. Slovak boys are quite **spoilt**. Their mums often become their "**servants**" up to adulthood. Later on, this over-care is expected to be passed on to their future wives. However, modern Slovak women are quite ambitious. They require more than just some help with little chores, such as cutting the grass, cleaning the

car or taking out the **rubbish**. Nowadays, we can see more and more fathers pushing **prams** or playing with their children in parks. Even more, there are some men who decide to stay at home with their babies on "**maternity**" leave instead of their wives who often have better paid jobs.

Partnership also means many duties and responsibilities connected with **bringing up** children. The main role of parents is to **raise** their children. Parents should teach how to **differentiate** between good and bad, how to solve problems in life, become an independent person and **care about** others. Democratic parents **lead a dialogue** with their children and respect their opinions. Authoritative parents set strict rules and do not look for compromises. Such an **approach** often leads to a **generation gap** between parents and their own children. Very liberal parents give too much freedom to their children without limits. **Over-caring** parents give too much love and usually bring up spoilt and dependent children who are unable to **set up** their own **families**. The main duty of children is learning and going to school. Besides that, children are expected to help their parents with some housework. Children should never forget to pay back their parents' love and care with kisses and **hugs** during their life.

Family is the product of historical development. Modern European families are monogamous and **egalitarian**. Married couples are expected to live **faithfully** without having any **love affairs**. The **average** age for marriage is much higher than it was in the past. The statistics shows that the majority of young people get married in their late twenties or early thirties. There are no **prejudices** against women and men who do not get married before a certain age. In the past, they were marked as **spinsters** and **bachelors**. Nowadays, they are **recognised** as modern people who either live with somebody in the same **dwelling** or as people who do not want to be **tied down** by marriage. Living together without being formally married is called **cohabitation**. It is still **dubious** to the older generation and totally unacceptable among Catholics. Some couples get married only when babies **appear**.

The wedding is a formal act that takes place in a town hall or in a church where the **engaged** couple exchange their wedding rings and promise to live together in good and bad times and in illness too. **Despite** this promise, it is often broken. **Research** shows that in Britain, one in three marriages ends up in divorce. American sources say that every second couple **gets divorced**. The **common** reasons are different interests, lack of **faith** and trust, financial reasons, living with parents and parents-in-law, **addiction** to alcohol, drugs, gambling, such as **slot machines** and unemployment. Broken families in Slovakia are no exceptions. Currently, Slovak teenagers have better **access** to sex education and **contraception** than in the past. It prevents marriages and divorces at an early age.

In the case of divorce or the death of one of the parents, children are brought up by a **single parent**. A woman who loses her husband is called a **widow** and a man is a **widower**. When they get married again, the new parents are called **step-parents**. The situation gets very serious when a child is separated from his loving mother, father or sibling. In some cases, divorced parents get married once again.

Bad relationships with new step-parents and siblings often result in frequent arguments.

Family life is different all around the world. In Slovakia many families get together for various occasions and anniversaries, such as birthdays, **graduations**, weddings, **christening** and **confirmation** parties, church **feasts** and **funerals**. Slovak families are known for their **hospitality**.

A family, a real home and relatives are what we need for life. They always help us when we need them.

➡ **See also** Unit 9 Jobs, Unit 10 Human Relationships, Unit 16 The Young and Their World

? Questions

1. How would you define the word "family"?
2. What are the functions of a family?
3. What is meant by the egalitarian character of a modern family?
4. What are the main roles of children and parents in a family?
5. What do you think about cohabitation?
6. What are the main reasons for divorce?
7. What makes marriage last?
8. Describe your own family. When do you usually get together?
9. Compare the similarities and differences of family life in Slovakia, Britain and the USA.
10. How do you understand the quotations about families? How are they related with the article?



Websites

<http://www.family.org/>
<http://familyfun.go.com/>
<http://www.familysearch.org/>



Unit 2

CULTURE AND ART

A man should hear a little music, read a little poetry and see a fine picture every day of his life. ♣ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.

♣ Pablo Picasso

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. Do you agree or disagree with Goethe's quotation? Explain your reasons.
2. What types of art do you know?
3. What is your favourite cultural event?

Culture and art are integral parts of the everyday life of people. They add **aesthetic value** to our lives, **enrich our mind** and please our senses. Various cultural events present an interesting way of spending the free time of individuals, couples and families. Both culture and art are parts of **national heritage** of every country – all of them **do their best** to develop and **promote** it. Cities offer many cultural attractions to citizens and tourists.

Art is a way of communicating feelings. Artists **express** themselves in many forms – music, literature, architecture, painting, **drawing**, sculpture. Music, dance and theatre are **performing arts**. Painting, sculpture, architecture and photography are decorative arts.

Music has become a hobby, a profession and a part of the lifestyle of many people. Those who like classical music can enjoy a concert of a philharmonic orchestra in a concert hall or attend a festival. Some of the festivals are **held annually**, such as the *Bratislava Music Festival*. **Composers** like *Mozart*, *Beethoven* and *Bach* have become the most important figures of the European musical heritage. *Ode to Joy*, a part of Beethoven's **masterpiece** *Ninth Symphony*, became the **anthem** of the European Union. **Opera lovers** can choose from a list of opera **performances** in one of the many opera houses, such as the *Royal Opera House* in London, where visitors can see both opera and ballet performances. A very famous concert **venue** in New York City is *Carnegie Hall* where concerts of classical as well as popular music are held. **Spectators** can enjoy its extraordinary **acoustics**.

Fans of different music styles – pop, rock, jazz, blues or country can enjoy the music at music festivals of the different genres, go to see their favourite singers or groups **live** at concerts or simply listen to CDs, MP3 players or watch concerts on DVDs. Thanks to digital technology the music industry **supplies the market** with all possible music genres recorded on many different types of media.

Slovakia is famous for its tradition of folklore music. Folklore groups dressed in traditional costumes dance at folklore festivals (the most famous is the one held in July in Východná). Young people prefer modern dance which includes many different types. Oriental dance is becoming very popular among women **throughout the whole of Europe**.

Dramatic art has a very long tradition in countries like England and France. The famous English theatre company, the *Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre*, brings together famous actors and **directors** of the world to work on the greatest **plays**. Numerous London theatres are concentrated in the *West End*, the **entertainment epicentre** of London, which **remained** a fashionable place for theatre and opera **throughout the years**. One of the major cultural events in Scotland is the *Edinburgh International Festival* which is a festival of classical music, opera, theatre and dance. Slovak **theatre-goers** can also enjoy various types of theatre performances. Musicals, **performed** at the *New Scene Theatre* in Bratislava, have become very popular in the last few years. Other favourite theatres in this town include the *Small Scene of the Slovak National Theatre*, the *Hviezdoslav Theatre*, the *Arena Theatre* and others.

Cinema generally **enjoys great popularity**. In Slovakia most films are American productions; in the cinemas they are often shown with Slovak subtitles, on the TV they are **dubbed**. French, Spanish and other foreign language films are quite rare, mostly presented at film festivals or in special film clubs. The most famous international film festivals are held in *Cannes*, *Venice* and *Berlin*. Ordinary small cinemas are now being replaced by large multi-screen air-conditioned complexes in shopping centres. Some of them have introduced three-dimensional (3D) films. In summer, people like to go to **open-air cinemas**. The number of cinema-goers has **dropped** throughout the years because films are now **available** on DVDs. They can be rented from DVD rental shops. Every year, actors, actresses, directors and **screenplay** writers are **awarded a prize** for their **achievements** in filmmaking. The **Academy Award** (Oscar) is the main national film award in the USA.

There is a **great variety of media** in which an artist can work. Paintings (**fine art**) of famous painters and sculptors like *Picasso*, *Van Gogh*, *Rembrandt*, *Claude Monet* or *Michelangelo* are **immortal** and their **artworks** can be seen in a **number of museums** around the world. *The National Gallery* in London **houses** one of the greatest collections of European paintings in the world. *The Tate Gallery* is the national gallery of British art, also **located** in London.

Visitors to Bratislava can admire the colour paintings, **landscapes**, portraits and other **works of arts** in the *Slovak National Gallery* or the *Bratislava City Gallery*.

The works of artists can be categorised into **so called** styles – Impressionism, Modernism, Surrealism, Naive Art, Pop Art and others.

Architecture is the art and science of designing buildings. It includes town planning, **urban** design, landscape architecture (development of gardens, parks and other green outdoor spaces) and **interior** design (furniture). Many **architectural works** may also be seen as cultural and political symbols and they are often works of art. They can have both a functional and aesthetic character. Some new architectonic structures were made possible only thanks to new materials and the development of technology. Famous architects of the Renaissance period were *Michelangelo* and *Leonardo da Vinci*, who were also artists and scientists. **At that time** there was no clear **dividing line** between an artist and an architect. One of the most famous architects of the 20th century was the **controversial** Austrian architect *Friedensreich Hundertwasser*, known for his revolutionary architectural designs.

Cultural events in the **countryside** are not that **frequent**. People who live in villages all their lives prefer gardening, visiting friends or watching TV. Many **inhabitants** of Bratislava have recently moved to villages, trying **to get away from** the busy city life. **As** they do not live too far from the city, they can still enjoy the cultural life the city offers.

? Questions

1. What does "the national heritage" mean?
2. Why do people like cultural events?
3. How does your town promote cultural events?
4. What kinds of music performances do you like?
5. How often do you go to the theatre?
6. Where can you see theatre performances in London?
7. What kinds of cinemas do people you know like to go to?
8. Do you think that the Slovak cinemas offer attractive programmes?
9. What does architecture include?
10. Why don't people living in the countryside have enough opportunities to see cultural events?



Websites

<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/culture/events.jsp>

<http://www.allmusic.com/>

<http://www.londontheatre.co.uk/>



Unit 3

SPORTS AND GAMES

I have lost this battle, but I will win the war.

♣ Anna Kournikova

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. Give the names of some typical English and American sports and games.
2. Why do people play games?
3. What sports and games are you interested in?

Sports can be generally divided into **indoor** and **outdoor sports**. Gymnastics is a typical indoor sport, athletics a typical outdoor sport. It includes **track and field events** (the marathon, **long-distance run**, **cross-country run**, **relay-race**) and **sprinting events** (the hundred metres, **hurdles**). Jumping (high jump, long jump, **triple jump**, **pole jump**) and throwing (**hammer**, **discus**, **javelin**, **shot put**) are also athletic sports. Indoor sports can be practised all the year round, but many outdoor sports, such as cycling, **hiking** and most water sports, like **sailing**, **regatta**, **water-skiing**, **diving**, wind-surfing and others, depend on the weather and so are mostly enjoyed during the summer. Swimming is also a typical summer sport, but it is possible to practise it all the year round in **indoor pools**. Swimming includes **breaststroke**, **backstroke**, **crawl** and **butterfly**.

In winter, sportsmen practise winter sports, such as skiing, skating, snow-board-ing and **tobogganing**. Skiers can practise the **giant slalom**, **downhill racing** or ski jumps in **ski resorts** where there are good snow conditions. Skating includes **figure skating** and **speed skating**, which are practised on **skating rinks**. In Slovakia there are a lot of ski resorts and most winters the snow conditions are **favourable**. That is why many Slovaks like this sport and go skiing almost every weekend. Polish, Hungarian and Czech tourists also come to the High and the Low Tatras to ski. Some skiers prefer the Austrian ski resorts because of the high quality of service.

Games are those sports in which at least two players are **involved**. The most popular games are football, rugby, hockey, tennis, golf, cricket, basketball, volleyball, badminton, squash and handball.

British are sport-loving people. Some of the games, such as football, rugby, golf and tennis, **originated** in Britain and **spread all over the world** from there. The most popular game is football. The **Cup Final** is the most important football match

of the year in England. It is played at *Wembley Stadium* near London, which has the seats for 100 000 **spectators**. British like to say that one of the most important years in English history is 1966 because that is the year when England won the football World Cup.

Slovaks are good at hockey. A lot of Slovak hockey players play in *American* and *Canadian National Hockey League* teams. The American, Russian, Canadian and Swedish hockey teams are considered the best. The Czechoslovak hockey team was considered one of the best, but after the **split** of Czechoslovakia, the Slovak and the Czech national hockey teams **took part in** the World Cups **separately** and even **played against each other**. The Slovak team **lost** in the final of the 2000 World Cup against the Czech Republic. However, the Slovak team were the winners of the 2002 *World Cup of Hockey*. Hockey is not only played professionally in our country, but it is also enjoyed by many people of all generations (including girls and women) who like to watch it in the stadiums or on the TV. Becoming a professional hockey player is one of the most frequent dreams of Slovak boys.

Besides team games, such as football and rugby, tennis is also very popular. Tennis can be played on a grass court or a hard court. The most famous tennis **tournament** is played at *Wimbledon* every year. The **championship** is watched by thousands of spectators and **TV viewers** all over the world.

Americans also pay a lot of attention to sports and games. The most popular games are baseball, American football, basketball, tennis, boxing, **wrestling** and ice-hockey. There is an increasing interest in football too, although it is called soccer in America. There are many beautiful winter sport centres in the USA. Typical winter sports, such as skiing, skating and snow-boarding, are very popular. Tennis and squash are leading summer sports in the USA. Squash is a game for two players played in a **four-walled court** with a special racket and a soft ball. There are also a lot of specific water sports, such as yachting, wind-surfing and surfing, which are loved by many young people.

Most people do sports because they need to relax and they know that practising a sport, **suitable for** them, can improve their health. Some sport activities, such as aerobics, jogging, swimming or body building, are preferred by those who want to **lose weight**. Many parents want their children to do a sport. Most of the children do it as a hobby, but some later become professionals. The parents believe that doing a sport is a good way of spending free time for their children and it develops their character. Many children and young people do a team sport. A lot of **competitions** are **held** both on national and international levels. Winning a game is a great motivation for the players to continue to improve, but it is also important to learn to **accept defeat** when the team loses.

Professional sport is, **unfortunately**, connected with several negative **phenomena**. High competition in sport forces the **elite** sportsmen and women to be the best. This often **leads to overtraining** or doping, which has a very negative effect on their health. During important competitions the sportsmen and women are tested and may easily be disqualified. This may have a negative **impact** on their career. Success

in professional sport is nowadays connected with money and popularity. Some of the top sportsmen and women find it difficult to **cope with** being rich and famous.

Two of the most important **sport events** are the *Summer and Winter Olympic Games* which are held every four years in a different country. It first took place in **ancient Greece**. *Pierre de Coubertin* **revived** this idea and became the **founder** of the modern Olympic Games. The Olympic Rings are a **well-known** symbol of the Olympic Games. They represent the **unity** of five continents. They **appear** in five colours on the Olympic Flag. The first part of the Olympic **creed** "*The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part...*" is often used for all kinds of other competitions. Only the best sportsmen and women of each country are chosen to take part in the Olympic Games. For them it is a great **honour** to represent their country. People all over the world pay a lot of attention to these sports events and that is why the Olympic Games are often **under the threat of terrorist attacks**. **Therefore**, the countries which organise the games try to **ensure** maximum security for everybody involved in the games.

➤ **See also** Unit 18 Hobbies, Leisure and Lifestyle



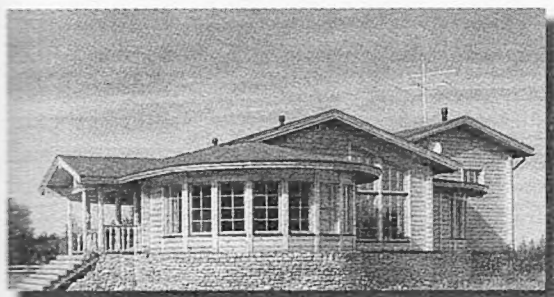
Questions

1. How can sports be divided?
2. What is the difference between sports and games?
3. Which sports and games originated in Britain?
4. Which is the most popular British game?
5. Why is 1966 an important year in English sporting history?
6. Where do the best tennis champions of the world play every year?
7. Name some negative phenomena of professional sport.
8. Who was the winner of the last World Cup of Hockey?
9. Where did the Olympic Games originate and what is their symbol?
10. What do you think about the creed of the Olympic Games?



Websites

<http://www.wimbledon.org>
<http://www.fifa.com/en/index.html>
<http://www.nhl.com>



Unit 4

HOUSING

A good home must be made, not bought. ♣ Joyce Maynard

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. Do you live in a house or in a flat?
2. Describe the household equipment an average Slovak family has.
3. What is your idea of a perfect house?

We all are very much **influenced** by the place where we grow up. Our whole life **is marked by** places where we live, stay or work. There comes a time when we want **to settle down** and create our own home. Everyone of us has a dream home in a dream country which would correspond to all our needs and **desires**. In real life we try to make the best possible **compromise**.

Living in towns and cities has both **advantages** and **disadvantages**. **On the one hand**, there are many job opportunities, better schooling possibilities, a rich social life, sports facilities. There are many cultural events held, such as concerts, operas, theatre performances. People can go out to cafés, pubs, night clubs. There are many **shopping malls** where one can buy all sorts of goods under one roof. There are usually a few local hospitals which provide a high standard of health care. **On the other hand**, city **inhabitants** live in a **polluted**, noisy, **crowded** and hectic place. The air in towns cities is often polluted by **fumes** from **factory chimneys** and cars. There is often a lot of mess and dirt in the streets. Many city people live in housing estates, which is not an ideal place to **raise** children. The most serious problem of towns and cities is a high level of criminality caused by **pickpockets**, **shoplifters**, **burglars**, **murderers** and drug dealers.

In the past, there was a strong tendency to move to towns. Nowadays, more and more people move back to the country where they look for peace and a healthy way of living. The houses in village are cheaper than the ones in towns.

Many Slovaks live in flats. A flat is situated in the same building as other flats, often forming part of a **block of flats** or town house. During the communist period a lot of **huge housing estates** were built in our country. These days, a lot of them are being reconstructed and new ones are being built but not as many as before. A flat may be very large with nearly as much space as a house, or it may be just one room with a kitchen and bathroom. Most of the flats in Slovakia are two-, three- or four-room flats.

British people prefer to live in houses rather than flats. There are several types of houses in Britain: **terraced** houses, back-to-back houses, town houses, **semi-detached** houses, **detached** houses and bungalows. Terraced houses are built in a **row**, back-to-back houses share a back wall, semi-detached houses are joined together by one common wall. A detached house stands by itself and a bungalow is built on one level. Slovak houses are usually quite big and the older ones are sometimes shared by two families – grandparents, their children and grandchildren.

Slovaks and British people love gardening. Slovaks **tend to** have bigger gardens behind their houses and they spend quite a lot of time **growing** vegetables and fruits. There is a lot of work around the house **throughout the whole year**. Both Slovaks and British are very **skillful** and do a lot of work themselves.

A **cottage**, a small traditional country house, is quite popular in our country. Some families have cottages near woods or lakes and like to spend their weekends there. British people also like country houses. Some British families have them in France.

A typical British house **is set** in a small garden and has two **storeys**. It is usually **designed** for a family of four or five people. There is a hall, a front room, a back room, a kitchen and a **storage space** downstairs. A garage is normally attached to the house. Upstairs, there is one big bedroom and two smaller ones, a bathroom and a **lavatory**.

The furniture in British and Slovak rooms is not very different nowadays. The sitting room has a **settee** and armchairs, a **wall unit** with the hi-fi system, television and video, a bookcase and a coffee table. There is a carpet on the floor to make the room warm and comfortable. Most of the British houses have a **fireplace** because of cold weather. The kitchen furniture includes the kitchen **cupboards**, **sink**, **cooker** and **fridge-freezer**. They are usually all **built-in**. There is also a table with chairs or **stools**. The floor in the kitchen is often **tiled**. Slovak families usually have their washing machine in the bathroom, the British in the kitchen. The bedroom has a double bed, built-in **wardrobes**, dressing table with a mirror on the wall and a stool in front of the table.

As the standard of living is generally very high in the USA, the average American family can live comfortably and well. Many **wealthy** people have very large houses with many rooms, tennis courts and swimming pools. In the centre of big American cities, many people live in apartments (flats) situated in large apartment buildings. The majority of Americans live in detached houses with a front and back gardens. The houses are well-furnished and **equipped** with modern **household appliances**. Each child in the family has his/her own room. Like the British people, Americans do not usually stay in the same house their whole lives. Some families like to **move** to other parts of the country and change houses more than once in a **decade**.

Both in Slovakia and Great Britain, it is not easy to buy one's own flat or a house. In both countries, the prices of **property** are extremely high. It is impossible for a young family to buy a flat without the help of parents or a **mortgage**. In order to buy a house, a family does not need to have all the money – there are many banks

from which it is possible to **borrow** up to 90 per cent of the value of the house as a mortgage. Almost half of all British families own the houses in which they live. A lot of them **pay off** the mortgage for many years after moving into a house. In Slovakia more and more people **take advantage of** the mortgage too. Some **take out a loan** for the reconstruction of their flats or houses.

Homelessness is a big social problem in many countries. Many homeless people are alcoholics, **mentally-ill** or just unemployed people left without **means of living**. In our country more and more **asylum houses** are built for them.

☞ *See also* Unit 20 Towns and Places

? Questions

1. Is it necessary to have all the money to buy a house in Britain? Explain.
2. What are the basic types of houses in Britain?
3. What does a typical British house look like?
4. What kinds of gardens do the houses in Slovakia normally have?
5. Where do the majority of American people live?
6. Compare the household equipment an average American and Slovak family has.
7. Do Americans stay in the same house all their lives?
8. Why is it complicated to buy a house or a flat?
9. Describe your house or flat.
10. What is your idea of a perfect home?



Websites

<http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/CET/flashactivities/houses.html>



Unit 5

SHOPPING AND SERVICES

A business that makes nothing but money is a poor business. ♣ Henry Ford

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. Do you like shopping?
2. What have you bought for yourself recently?
3. Where does your family normally do their shopping?
4. What kinds of services do you need most often?
5. Discuss the quality of services in Slovakia.

SHOPPING

Shopping is an activity that is enjoyed by many people. There are also people who hate shopping and say that it is a **waste of time**. Love it or hate it, shopping is necessary to buy the things you need.

There are many kinds of shops **ranging** from large **shopping malls**, **department stores** and supermarkets to small **specialised** shops, such as **grocer's**, **baker's**, **iron-monger's**, **butcher's**, **stationer's**, **greengrocer's**, **chemist's**, bookshop, shoe shop and boutique. The shop assistants are ready to help the customers and ask them: *What can I do for you? Can I help you? What will you have? Is anyone serving you? What can I show you?*

A **grocery store**, more often called a corner shop, can be found locally in most towns and cities. It sells a wide variety of **foodstuffs** including various kinds of tea and coffee, **bottled** beer and juice, sweets, frozen and **tinned** vegetables and fruit. They also have **dairy products**, such as milk, butter, **cream**, cheese and yoghurt. They normally sell newspapers and magazines as well-furnished.

A supermarket is a large **self-service** grocery shop. It also sells some other products, such as clothes or **household appliances**.

Various kinds of fresh bread, **rolls**, **buns** and cakes can be bought at a baker's. Butchers sell meat including **pork**, **beef**, **lamb** or **poultry**. At the butcher's people can also buy tinned and frozen meat and fish.

People who like to do gardening and some **do-it-yourself** work around the house frequently need some **hardware**. They can go to an ironmonger's to buy hammer, **pliers**, nails and other tools and materials. Larger hardware shops are called DIY stores.

Writing paper, **wrapping paper**, **envelopes**, **notebooks**, pens, pencils, **crayons**, **glue**, **rubber** and **rulers** are sold at stationer's shops.

Fresh vegetables and all kinds of fruit can be bought at the greengrocer's. Many people prefer shopping at the **market** where there is a wider choice of potatoes, cabbages, beans, carrots, tomatoes, apples, pears, oranges or bananas. Many people who sell their fruit, vegetables and flowers at the market in our country do not grow it anymore because it is easier and cheaper to buy from abroad. In the past, most of the fruit and vegetables were grown and sold in the country.

The chemist's is a specialised shop where people can buy **medicines**. In Britain the chemist also **keeps** cosmetics and **toiletory supplies**, such as make-up, shaving-cream, **razor blades**, shampoo, soap and toothbrushes.

Boutiques sell the latest fashion. Many of them create a **chain store**. Here, people have a wide choice of dresses, shirts, skirts, blouses, pullovers, jeans but also **stockings** and **scarves**. There are boutiques which also offer leather goods, such as leather jackets, shoes, bags and leather **belts**. Some of the clothes and shoes are made in Slovakia, but most of them are imported from Italy, Poland or Asia.

Department stores are large buildings, usually several **storeys** high. They have many **departments** which offer their customers all kinds of foodstuffs, clothes, shoes, toys, sporting goods, **leather goods**, **cleaning supplies** and cosmetics, **china** and glass, hardware goods, household appliances, books and furniture, **all under one roof**. The big department stores started in America and the idea was brought to England by *Gordon Selfridge* some 80 years ago. *Selfridge's* is still one of the biggest stores in London. It is situated in the *Oxford Street* in the centre of the *West End*. Other **world-famous** stores include *Harrods* in London and *Macy's* in New York.

A hypermarket is a big store which combines a supermarket and a department store. A wide variety of products are sold under one roof, such as clothes, household appliances and furniture. These days, a lot of Slovaks do their weekly shopping in a hypermarket, such as *Carrefour* or *Tesco*. An example of an American hypermarket is *Wal-Mart*. Hypermarkets are usually situated outside cities and are **surrounded** by large **parking lots**. Some are even open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, the so-called 24:7.

In Slovakia more and more shopping malls are built every year. A shopping mall is a large **indoor** shopping centre that **contains** many different types of stores. These shops are often **open** for much longer hours, including evenings and Sundays. The shopping malls have **cafés**, snack bars or restaurants where people can relax when they **are tired of shopping**. They also have cinemas, wellness centres and bowling centres.

Nowadays more and more customers prefer shopping in hypermarkets, department stores or shopping malls, where everything can be found under one roof, to

shopping in small specialised shops. It is very difficult for small specialised stores to **compete** with them and that is why a lot of the small shops close down. People who prefer small shops say that the goods are fresher and the contact with the **shop assistants** is much more personal. They also do not **spend too much time shopping**. On the other hand, big stores have a **wider choice** of goods, usually at cheaper prices and everything can be bought in one place. Big shopping centres are often **criticised** because they **encourage** the **consumer society** – **extensive advertising** and media influence. They produce so called shopaholics who cannot **resist** spending money and often buy things that they do not need.

Apart from **direct sale**, it is also gradually becoming popular to buy goods through **mail order**. This includes buying things through a catalogue or the Internet. Slovaks mostly use the Internet to buy books, electronics, clothes and also products that they cannot find in shops. **Door-to-door selling** is becoming less and less popular in our country. More and more Slovaks get things on **hire purchase**, which means that they only pay a part of the **required amount of money** for the goods they have chosen and afterwards pay regular **installments**.

Slovakia imports a lot of products from different countries **all over the world** and exports mainly **vehicles**, machinery, electrical **equipment**, metals, chemicals and plastics.

SERVICES

There are many companies which do not offer any goods for **sale**, but they **provide services** for people. In everyday life, people need different kinds of services, mostly cleaning, repair and **maintenance** services. They have their hair cut by hairdressers, their car repaired by car-mechanics, their garden designed by garden designers, or their **gas pipes** repaired by **plumbers**. They also sometimes need consultations with a lawyer or a **real estate agent**. When they are ill, doctors and nurses provide services for them. Nowadays, there is a lot of **competition** in the service industry in our country.

Post

In a town there are a lot of different kinds of services. Almost everybody uses the services of a post office. The post distributes letters, postcards, telegrams, **parcels** and other printed material to the **recipients**. When we want to send an important document, we send a **registered letter** or parcel. When we send a letter abroad, we can also use **airmail**. If the post cannot deliver a letter or parcel for **whatever** reason, it is sent back to the **sender**. We can also use the postal services to send money. In this case we have to fill in a **postal order**. Slovak companies also use the delivery services of companies, such as **UPS** or **DHL**, which **guarantee** express **deliveries worldwide**. Before the Internet age, people used to send many letters and postcards by post. When they wanted to send a quick **note**, they sent a telegram. Nowadays, these are gradually being replaced by e-mail letters, e-mail postcards or **text messages**.

Bank

Banks provide financial services for people. We can **pay** for goods and services **in cash or by bank card**. In Slovakia it is **less common** to pay **by cheque**. Most people nowadays have a **current account** in a bank. Their **earnings** regularly come to their account. When they need cash, they **withdraw a certain amount of money from the account**. People usually do this through a **cash machine**, using a bank card. The machine **displays** the **balance** of the account. It is possible to **exceed** the amount up to an agreed **overdraft limit**. If you **overdraw your account**, you have to pay **interest**. When **the account is overdrawn**, you are **in the red as opposed to in the black** or in credit). Most people use their accounts to pay their bills. If the **payments** are regular, you can ask for a **standing order**. **Bank transfer** using the Internet banking service is becoming popular in our country. The bank sends us a regular **account statement** telling us how much money is in our account. We may also have a **savings account** where we **deposit** any extra money that we want to **save**. If we need to **borrow money**, the bank may give us a loan. If the bank **lends** us **money** for building a house, the money is called a **mortgage**. When we buy (or more formally, **purchase**) something in a shop, we can **buy it on credit**. The money that we pay for services, for example to a school or a lawyer, is usually called a **fee**, the money paid for a journey is a **fare**. If we buy something that we feel was very good **value**, it's a **bargain**. If we feel that what we paid is **not worth it**, we call it a **rip-off**.

Police

Police are **in charge of maintaining** law and **order** and protecting the citizens. In Slovakia the police force is divided into two groups, the city and the state police. City police discipline people who behave badly, such as **drunkards** or **drug addicts**. They ask them for their personal identification documents. If they do not have them, they are taken to the police station. They also **fine** drivers for bad parking. If citizens are **victims of crime** (e. g. **assault**, **robbery**, **rape** etc.), or **involved in** a car accident, they usually **address** the state police. At the police station people can also get new **identity cards** or passports.

In the past, during the communist period, shops were **owned by** the state. There were no private post offices, **filling stations** or banks. Nowadays, all the **service providers** try to stay **competitive** on the market and that is why they have to invest into advertising. Advertising in the media has an **enormous impact on** people. When a company introduces a new product or service, they usually do a **promotion**. This can be done through various **channels**, such as TV, radio, press, billboards or the Internet, which are often combined to **achieve** a bigger effect. In general, **publicity** has a great impact on people. However, today we are more critical about it and we do not **get influenced** as much as we did before. We have learnt to be more selective and care more about the quality, **although** price is still a very important factor in Slovakia. Advertising agencies try to use more and more **sophisticated** techniques

to make us buy a product or use a service. Sometimes we do not even realise that a product or a company is advertised, for example in a film.

➞ *See also* Unit 15 Mass Media (The Internet)

? Questions

1. What kinds of specialised shops do you know?
2. What can you buy at the grocer's / baker's / butcher's / stationer's / greengrocer's / chemist's / Ironmonger's?
3. What are supermarkets?
4. What can you get at a department store?
5. Why do people like shopping at large shopping malls?
6. Where were the first department stores built?
7. Which are London's largest department stores?
8. Is shopping a pleasant activity or a waste of time for you?
9. Compare shopping in a small village with shopping in a large city.
10. Who does the shopping in your family?
11. Name some services.
12. What kinds of services does the post office provide?
13. How can we pay for goods or services?
14. What can you do with a bank card?
15. What is an account statement?
16. What does it mean "to be in the red"?
17. What is a mortgage?
18. Name some methods of advertising.
19. What is the Slovak state police responsible for?
20. Are you influenced by publicity?



Websites

<http://www.ny.com/shopping/department/macys.html>

<http://www.harrods.com>



Unit 6

HEALTH CARE

Health is not valued till sickness comes.

✧ *Dr. Thomas Fuller*

❶ Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. How do you take care of your health?
2. What do you know about AIDS?
3. How are diseases spread?

We need to **be in good shape** and also have good **mental health** to be able to work and fully enjoy our lives. Doctors often **stress** that mental health **influences** our physical **condition**. Problems with **digestion**, **ulcers**, or **migraines** are results of mental problems, such as depression, fear or anger. Bad eating habits, **lack** of physical activities, **sedentary work**, stress – all these factors cause **serious diseases**.

More and more people today seem to realise that good health means a longer and happier life. Therefore, they **take better care of their health** than before. They eat healthier food, practise different kinds of sports and try to **avoid stressful** situations as much as possible. A healthy, strong and beautiful body is an ideal for the **majority of people** and not only among the young. It is not so difficult to **pursue this aim** if we live in a developed country with good **health care**. However, in countries of the **Third World** too many people are still **starving** and **epidemics of plague**, cholera, **typhus** and malaria are part of everyday life, and not long forgotten epidemics of the past.

When we are ill, we usually see a doctor (**general practitioner**). Sometimes we need to have an appointment with a specialist. The doctor **examines** our body, asks about the symptoms and usually **prescribes** some medication, which is usually **available on prescription** in a pharmacy. When the **illness** is too serious to be **treated** at home, the patient is taken to hospital and sometimes even **undergoes surgery**. People who are employed pay their **health insurance** monthly. They do not need to pay for the basic health care and basic medication. When they want extra care or special **treatment**, they have to pay the extra **costs**. Some people decide to go to a private health care **establishment**, usually for **surgical interventions**, **delivery** or **dental care**.

Everybody goes through **various** diseases during their childhood and adult life. Most of the diseases are not serious and do not take a long time to **cure**. Thanks to research in medicine (both in **diagnostics** and treatment), microbiology and chemistry, we now have **efficient medication** against diseases, such as **flu**, **tuberculosis**, or **scarlet fever**, which killed many people in the previous centuries. Nowadays, there exist **vaccines** against most of them. However, there are diseases which we have problems to cure or cannot cure at all yet.

Cancer is one of the biggest **threats** nowadays. Every year, more and more people of all ages are **diagnosed with** tumors of all types. However, scientists develop more and more efficient treatment techniques. In the last few years, they started to talk more about this disease in the media and we can say that it is not a **taboo** anymore. We also get a lot of information about the prevention of cancer and its treatment. *Daffodil Day* is organised in many countries, including Slovakia. The money raised from *Daffodil Day* is used to **fund scientific research** of the **causes** and treatment of cancer and to provide support for people with cancer and their families. This way people also hear and learn more about it and they realise that anybody can become a patient of an oncology centre.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is one of the most serious diseases that **threatens** people nowadays. It is a **viral disease** that **impairs the immune system** of the human body leaving it open to any infection. Those infections that are not dangerous for people with normal immune systems may be **mortally dangerous** for AIDS patients. According to the **World Health Organization** more than 3.6 million people are **infected**. It does not mean that they all will develop the disease, but all of them are able to infect other people. AIDS was first identified in homosexuals, but later it was found among **intravenous drug abusers**, **haemophiliacs** and other persons who had received blood transfusion, heterosexuals and their children. No cure or vaccine for AIDS has yet been discovered. Many countries of the world spend a lot of money trying to find a cure. There are large public **campaigns** all over the world telling people all about AIDS prevention – trying to stop more people catching the disease. “Don’t die of **ignorance**” – is the British campaign’s slogan. Advertisements in newspapers, on television and in the streets warn of the danger. Publicity has also concentrated on heterosexual people who are encouraged to use a condom to help to **cut down the risk** of catching AIDS. They are also advised to have only one sexual partner. The danger of AIDS has **brought up questions** of morality, promiscuity and **fidelity in contemporary society**.

In the last decade, the world has been threatened by flu epidemics. The first one, **SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)**, is a highly **contagious** disease which was first **recognised** in 2003. The virus probably originated in Chinese factory farms. The virus **spread** rapidly from Asia to other countries, including Canada, infecting hundreds of people. Scientists say that the development of effective **drugs** and vaccines for SARS **is likely to take a long time**. The second one, the **bird flu**, is very contagious among birds and can also kill some domesticated birds (e. g. chickens, ducks and turkeys). Thousands of birds had to be killed after the virus appeared

on farms all over the world. The virus does not usually infect humans and **transmission** from one person to another has not been observed yet.

Every year, many people **worldwide** become victims of various accidents. Most of the accidents happen on the road, many at work. In every country, a lot of different **security measures** are taken to prevent car accidents. Many children are **injured** playing outside or at home handling dangerous objects.

During the communist period, there was a **state monopoly** in health care in our country. After the political changes in 1989, Slovakia gradually introduced a **reform of the health care system**. **Privatization** (of pharmacies and hospitals) and the development of the **insurance** system were the **main aims** of the reform. Some hospitals became **semi-independent** institutions. Patients are now free to choose their doctor.

☛ **See also** Unit 3 Sports and Games, Unit 17 Food, Unit 18 Hobbies, Leisure and Lifestyles



Questions

1. Which diseases did you go through as a child?
2. Which diseases are caused by depression, anger or fear?
3. What do people do to prevent serious diseases?
4. What is Daffodil Day?
5. What is AIDS?
6. What kind of people are at risk?
7. What do publicity campaigns concentrate on?
8. What kinds of flu epidemics appeared in the last decade?
9. What were the basic aims of the reform of the health care system in Slovakia?
10. Do people in our country use private health care establishments?



Websites

<http://www.who.int>

<http://www.cdc.gov/page.do>



Unit 7

TRAVELLING

A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it.

✧ George Moore

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. Where do you usually travel?
2. What is the best experience you have had while travelling?
3. What plans do you have for travelling this year?

Every day hundreds of people travel from one place to another. They **travel** to work, to school or **on business**. Many people travel **for pleasure**. **Traveling abroad** has **recently** become very popular. In every season of the year, airports, **railway stations**, **seaports** and bus stops are full of people travelling **for long or short distances**.

Before 1989, Slovaks were basically **allowed to** travel only to Eastern European countries, Eastern Germany, Bulgaria, Romania and the **former** Yugoslavia. Nowadays, Slovaks mostly travel abroad to study, to work or on holidays. After **Slovakia joined the EU** in 2004, many Slovaks have found work abroad. As the number of **scholarships** has **increased**, more and more Slovak secondary school and university students spend a year or a semester abroad. Many Slovak girls work as au pairs mostly in Great Britain and Germany. There exist a number of student agencies which are able to find work abroad and **arrange** everything necessary. Slovak membership in the EU has made travel easier. Slovaks do not need passports anymore to travel to EU countries, they only need their identity cards. However, there are countries outside the EU we still need a visa to go to.

The average Slovak family tries to go on holidays at least once a year. Some prefer winter holidays and go to Slovak or Austrian **ski resorts** to ski. Most people travel during the summer holidays because the weather **conditions** are usually **favourable** and children do not go to school. Some people prefer to travel to a Slovak holiday resort, but many choose to travel abroad. Families usually **address a travel agency** and choose a trip from a catalogue. The agency usually arranges everything – travel, **accommodation**, **insurance** and a travel guide. The most frequent summer holiday **destinations** of Slovaks are Croatia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Spain or Tunisia. Last minute or first moment offers have become extremely popular and people use them a lot.

However, there are people who prefer to travel on their own and do not need a travel agency to **make arrangements** for them. They **book** accommodation and travel on the Internet and study everything necessary before the **departure**. They are called **backpackers** and they usually **get to know** the country better because they **are in closer contact with** its people. There are more and more people for which travelling is a **lifetime passion**. **Globe-trotters** (world travellers) and travel journalists spend most of their time travelling **seeking** adventure and knowledge.

When people travel a long distance they usually **travel by air**. Travelling by air is exciting, fast, comfortable, relatively safe but **rather expensive**. Since the second half of the 20th century, it has become one of the most important **means of transport**. In countries, such as the USA, where the people have to travel long distances to get from one place to another, travelling by air has become quite common. It takes nearly six hours by plane to get from the **western** to the **eastern coast** of the USA. Nowadays, it is becoming increasingly common to use Internet-based travel agencies to book plane tickets. Some **low-cost airlines** only sell their tickets through the Internet. This is **becoming a common practice** in our country because several low-cost airlines operate from the airport in Bratislava.

At the airport passengers have to show their **flight tickets** and passports. Their luggage is **weighed** and they go through the **customs**. For **air traffic safety** both people and luggage have to be **checked** and metal objects have to be **detected**. Some rules even forbid passengers from having **containers filled** with any type of **liquid** in their **hand luggage**. In the plane a **steward** or **stewardess** shows passengers their seats and gives them safety information. Before the **aircraft** moves, signs **flash up** – “**Fasten Your Safety Belts**” and “**No Smoking**”. During the flight passengers are offered some meals, **refreshments** and drinks. After **landing**, passengers **disembark** and go to the **arrivals** hall, where they wait for their luggage. After showing their passports and visas to immigration officer they are free to enjoy the country where they have landed.

In our country trains are used daily by many people to travel to and from work or school. They are cheap, less polluting and safe but not very clean and comfortable. This is especially true of slow trains which stop at every station. Fast trains and intercity trains are more comfortable for longer distances. They do not stop at every station. Trains on longer journeys may have a **sleeping car** and **dining car** to make the journey more pleasant. Our railway system needs reorganising and modernising. Speaking about train travel in Europe, we should not forget to mention the **Channel Tunnel**, which connects the British railway system to the continental one. Direct trains **link** London with other European cities including Paris and Brussels. In the past, train travel was a very popular way of travelling all over the world, but in the last **decades** it has been replaced by other forms, such as travelling by plane, coach and car.

Coaches are buses for long-distance travel. They are fast and comfortable, with **reasonably priced** tickets. In our country many people prefer coaches to trains. During the holidays, travel agencies offer many coach trips to mountain or seaside

resorts. Travelling by coach to London, passengers may have the interesting experience of crossing the English Channel by **ferry**.

People's opinions on cars **differ** quite a lot. They **range** from positive to negative ones. Cars are comfortable and quick; they are not safe, they **pollute the environment** and are rather expensive. **In spite of that**, the number of cars on our roads and **motorways** grows higher and higher every year. In the USA, there are more cars **per person** than anywhere else (1.9 people per car). Many young drivers **contribute** much to the **accident rate**, which is very high. However, the speed limits and strict alcohol tests have **considerably** reduced traffic deaths.

Many people all over the world like travelling by bike. Some go to school by bike others prefer cycling as a sport or a hobby. Many people go for cycling holidays which is both healthy and exciting. This type of travel depends much on the weather and therefore summer is the best season for cycling tours.

Travel analysts try to **estimate** tourist destinations that will be popular in the future and describe future forms of travel. They say that Slovakia can be expected to be a popular holiday destination for its **natural scenery** and outdoor sports potential. Therefore, we need to invest a lot of money into the infrastructure and tourist services. They also say that there will be new types of tourist destinations – **aquatic** and cosmic. Flying high above the Earth in **airship** or staying at an underwater luxury hotel could become a part of our future summer holidays.

➤ **See also** Unit 8 Education, Unit 20 Towns and Places, Unit 24 English-Speaking Countries, Unit 25 Slovakia – My Homeland



Questions

1. Why do people travel?
2. What is the most suitable way of travelling for long distances?
3. What are the advantages / disadvantages of travelling by train?
4. How is the British railway system connected with the continental one?
5. Why is it easier for Slovaks to travel since Slovakia joined the EU?
6. What are low-cost airlines?
7. How can the accident rate on the roads be reduced?
8. When do you use the services of travel agencies?
9. What are the predictions of travel analysts about future forms of travel?
10. Which of the methods of travelling is the most dangerous?



Websites

http://www.space.com/business/technology/technology/hotel_future_040623.html



Unit 8

EDUCATION

It is possible to store the mind with a million facts and still be entirely uneducated.

✦ Alec Bourne

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. How long is compulsory school attendance in Slovakia?
2. What is the difference between high school, college and university?
3. Which schools give a better education – private or state ones?

Most people realise that a good **qualification** is very important for a successful **career**. **Educational systems** and types of **degrees** differ quite a lot from country to country. Education starts, in fact, in a **nursery school**. In Slovakia school attendance is **compulsory** from the age of 6 to 16, British children begin their education at the age of 5 and must **attend** school to the age of 16.

In Britain there are state schools and private schools (called **public schools**). The **majority** of British children (94 per cent) are educated in state schools which are **free of charge**. There are many private schools in Britain, mainly for the 11–18 age group. Public schools are **private boarding schools** which are **peculiar to Britain**. They are for children aged 13–18 accepted on the basis of the **entrance exams**. Only 5 per cent of all children attend public schools. Their **fees** are very high. The most exclusive ones, with a long tradition, are *Eton, Harrow and Winchester*.

Children in Britain continue to study at a secondary school, called a **comprehensive school**, which offers a **general education**. This ends at the age of sixteen, when most pupils take some form of public examination in about seven **subjects**. These *General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)* exams are national and give **pupils** a qualification that is **recognised across the whole country**. Most pupils continue their education after sixteen, for another two years, in the sixth **form** (two extra years at school) or at **college**. During these two years students take a more academic form of study **leading to advanced** examinations (A-Levels) in two to four subjects. These examinations are very important for those who want to continue their studies.

In Slovakia there are more and more private nursery, primary and secondary schools and there are also some private higher education institutions.

In our country pupils have to pass entrance exams to continue their studies.

a **secondary school**, unless there are not enough **applicants**. The best students normally **apply to** study at a **grammar school** (or **high school**) called *gymnázium*. It takes four years and it is popular because it normally prepares for university study. It is highly **selective** and only the best applicants can be taken. For pupils who start this school earlier it takes 8 years. There are also different types of secondary schools which usually take 4 years; the most popular are **secondary business schools**, technical schools, medical schools. **Vocational schools** and their training centres prepare students for different kinds of professions. The study lasts either three years and finishes with **achieving skill certificate** or five years which ends with **school-leaving exam** called *maturita*.

This exam is very important because its results **are taken into account** when students apply for university study. However, most students in our country have to **pass** entrance exams to be **accepted** to most universities. British universities choose their students according to the results of the A-level exams. The oldest and the most **prestigious** British universities include *Oxford University* and *Cambridge University*. The largest Slovak university is *Comenius University* in Bratislava.

Some young Slovaks decide to study at a foreign university in **neighbouring** countries, especially in Prague, Vienna or Brno. During the university studies many students decide to spend a **term** or a year at a foreign university. Many Slovaks university students and **graduates** work abroad during the summer (as au pairs, waiters or shop assistants) because it is an excellent **opportunity** to earn some money, speak a foreign language, see new cultures and meet new people. Studying or working abroad is **extremely useful** for them because they improve their foreign language skills and see new cultures. They also learn to live independently, **relying on** themselves. This often makes them more **self-confident**.

In **recent years**, the European Union has tried to reform higher education in the whole of Europe and make the individual systems more compatible. The Anglo-American BA (**bachelor**) – MA (**master's**) **degree** system has been introduced throughout the whole of Europe.

Extra-curricular activities are very important. There are many different clubs and sport teams at schools which meet after lessons. Many schools publish their own student newspapers and some have their own radio station. At secondary schools in our country many students spend their free time attending language courses or extra lessons to prepare themselves for the school-leaving exam and university entrance exams. In Britain and the USA many schools have an orchestra that gives concerts or a dramatic group that **stages a play** at Christmas. In the USA there are school teams that play baseball, basketball and American football against other schools.

The study at primary and secondary school in our country is quite **demanding**. The parents and teachers should therefore be **supportive** and motivating. It is important to **encourage** students, develop their creativity and make them **realise** the importance of a good qualification to their future lives.

Americans **take great pride** in their schools and want their children to have the best possible education. The USA does not have a national system of education.

There is a great **variety** and flexibility in elementary, secondary and higher education throughout the country. Each state is **responsible for** its own educational system. There are both state and private schools in the USA. Private schools are smaller and are usually **supported** by church groups or by private funds. Private school pupils pay their **tuition**. Most American children (88 per cent) attend state schools. American state schools are called public schools (which should not be confused with British public schools – those are actually private). Three levels can be distinguished in the American public school system: 1. Elementary (**Kindergarten**–6th grade), 2. Middle School (6th–8th grade), 3. High School (9th–12th grade). At high schools students have both compulsory subjects, such as English, Modern Language, Maths, **Chemistry** and **Biology** and **elective** subjects, such as Music, **Art**, **Physical Education**. At the end of the final year at high school, the students take a **nationwide** test, called the *Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)*. This test is in all subjects and the scores are used for college entrance requirements. About half of the young people who **graduate from** American high schools continue their education at colleges and universities. The USA has some of the world's most **outstanding** universities including *Harvard University (Massachusetts)*, *Yale University (Connecticut)*, *Princeton University (New Jersey)*, *the University of Chicago (Illinois)*, *Stanford University (California)* and others.

➞ **See also** Unit 14 Communication and Languages, Unit 16 The Young and Their World

? Questions

1. How long is compulsory full-time education in Britain?
2. What kind of education is offered by grammar schools in our country?
3. What do you know about British public schools?
4. What are A-level exams in Britain?
5. Would you like to spend a semester at a foreign university? Why?
6. How can parents and teachers encourage children to study?
7. Does the USA have a national system of education?
8. What is the difference between British and American public schools?
9. What do you know about American high schools?
10. Try to compare American and Slovak high school systems.



Websites

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning.htm>

<http://www.ed.gov>



Unit 9

JOBS

Professionalism: It's NOT the job you DO, it's HOW you DO the job.

✦ Author Unknown

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What kinds of professions do you admire?
2. Do women in Slovakia have to choose between a career and a family?
3. What kind of a job would you never like to do?

Work (or our **occupation**) plays an important role in our lives. This way we do not only earn money but also find our place in society, spend time with other people and feel useful. The economically active population includes people who **are willing and able to work** and people who **search for work** – **the unemployed**. The first group includes **self-employed** people and **employees**. The economically **inactive** people are **minors, the retired, the disabled, the sick** or those who do not wish or are **unable to work**. **Employment** is a contract between an employer and an employee. The employer is a person who **hires** employees. It can also be an institution. The employees receive **wages** for the work.

In larger organisations the **personnel selection** is organised by the *Human Resources Department*. The available positions are usually published in the newspapers or on the Internet. The candidates send the job **application** and their **CV**, together with a letter of motivation. Their CV should include personal data and details about education, skills and work experience. The ones who are chosen are invited to an **oral interview**. At the interview they usually answer questions, describe their motivation and **expectations**. For the candidates, it is important to prepare themselves for the interview, find information about the organisation or the company, answer **clearly** and stay calm. If a candidate **succeeds**, he or she is given an official **offer of employment** with a **defined starting salary**, position, **medical benefits** and **vacation days**. It is important to differentiate between the salary **before tax** and **after tax**. Employees can be hired **to work full-time** or **part-time** and have **permanent contracts** or **short-term contracts**. They are organised into **trade unions** which protest in case the employees are unhappy with low wages or few benefits.

Many people are self-employed and own their own business. They can but do not have to employ other people. People who are not paid wages and work are called **volunteers** – they usually **work for free** in regions in war or regions hit by natural catastrophes.

The **working time** in Europe varies between 33 and 41 hours a week. In Slovakia in most of the professions, the working time is 40 hours a week (8 hours a day).

However, there are more and more professions where people work long hours. That is why the *European Commission* **established** a maximum 48 hour week limit. **Shift work** describes regular employment outside the normal daytime hours and is typical for **healthcare** services (doctors, nurses), **protective** services (**emergency** medical services, police and **fire-fighters**) and production and transportation (**machine operators, truck drivers**). In Slovakia people, **in general**, start work at 8.00 in the morning and finish at 4 – 5 p.m. They normally have a **lunch break** at lunch time. Some people have **flexible working time**, which means they can work at different times or work from home. New technologies, especially the Internet, have enabled people to work from home. **Although** the employers could **reduce** their **costs** this way, work from home is still not very **common** in our country.

When a child is born to a couple, it is usually the mother who takes **maternity leave**. In Slovakia it takes three years. The maternity pay is not very high in our country, so the man is very often responsible for earning the **entire** family **income**. Later, when the child grows a little and is able to attend a **nursery school**, the mother often goes back to work. She has the responsibility for **childcare** and the **household**, so flexible working time is very **convenient** for her. Many families **cannot afford** this, so women often continue working full-time and take care of the child and the household too. It is very difficult for every woman to have both a good family life and a successful career.

After **reaching a certain age**, people **retire**. Until 2003 the **retirement age** for women in Slovakia was 53 – 57 years, depending on the number of children they have. For men it was 60 years. From 2004, this age gradually **shifted** to 62 years for both sexes. Sometimes, people **take early retirement**.

It is not easy to choose the right profession, especially **at a young age**. It is very important to have a profession that we are **suitable for** and we like. We have to **consider** several factors, such as the type of work, possible **promotion** and career development, salary, working time, travel opportunities, place of work and others. Nowadays, it is very important to be flexible – to be able to change **fields** or move to a different country.

We, **basically**, differentiate between **physical** and **intellectual work**. Physical work **requires** physical powers and **persistence**. Most **manual workers** work in **manufacturing** or **construct** buildings. There are many different types of intellectual work. Some professions require **detailed knowledge** (**scientists, doctors, lawyers, accountants**), others talent and creativity (**artists**). There are more and more professions that require communication and organisation skills, such as **public relations** managers, **interpreters**, teachers, **psychoanalysts, sales representatives** and others. In most of the professions nowadays, it is important to follow the trends. If people want to “stay in”, they have to attend seminars and trainings, read books or read news in their field on the Internet. In some occupations, people have responsibility for other peoples’ lives (doctors, pilots, drivers...). Professions like a policeman, pilot, construction worker and truck driver belong to very dangerous professions because there is a high risk of an injury or an accident.

The **labour market** in Slovakia has changed in the last **decade**. More work opportunities have been created thanks to foreign investors coming to the country to **set up their companies** here. A lot of people had to **complete their education** or **retrain**. However, the working conditions, especially the pay, is still **insufficient**. The salaries of Slovaks and the western Europeans are still **incomparable**. Slovakia started to reform the **social security system**, especially the **health insurance** and **pension security**.

In Slovakia, but also in some other countries, it is becoming more and more difficult to get a job. The **rate of unemployment varies** according to the regions – the Bratislava region has the lowest, while the Eastern Slovak region the highest rate. **The most concerned** are the young **graduates** and the people over 50 years old.

On the other hand, there is a **lack of qualified labour force** in some fields, such as car industry, **mechanical engineering** or **building industry**.

In every society, there are people who are not willing to work and never will be. They **benefit** from the social security system – they are **on the dole**. They often work **illegally** or are **supported** by somebody else.

In every person's life it is very important to keep a **reasonable balance** between work and their private life.

➡ *See also* Unit 8 Education, Unit 16 The Young and Their World

? Questions

1. What is the economically active population?
2. What are economically inactive people?
3. What is employment?
4. How do companies search for future employees?
5. How do people search for jobs?
6. What does it mean to work full-time and part-time?
7. Who are volunteers?
8. What are the reasons for the high rate of unemployment in some regions of Slovakia?
9. What is the retirement age for women and men in Slovakia?
10. Do you think that people in Slovakia work too much?

Websites

<http://www.alec.co.uk/cvtips/index.htm>
<http://www.europass.cedefop.eu.int/>



Unit 10

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave and impossible to forget. ★ G. Randolph

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What is your relationship with your parents like?
2. Describe the qualities of your best friend.
3. Explain the quotation of G. Randolph about true friends.

Human relationship describes the way people **get on with** each other talk and **behave** towards each other. Relationships are created between parents, children, **married couples**, friends, men and women, **employees** and **employers** etc. The quality of relationships with others **reflects** our own personality. It is our choice who we talk to, how we **treat** other people, how much time and energy we are **willing** to spend with them.

Families are the basic social units in which **informal** relationships are **formed**. **Besides** others, one of the most important roles of a parent is to **raise their children in accordance with** social models and **patterns of behaviour**. It means that children **observe** how their parents talk, behave to their relatives, friends, colleagues and **strangers**. Then, they behave **accordingly** in their **adulthood**.

Nowadays, human relationships are very complicated. Many people are **stressed out**, busy and tired. A **full-valued** relationship is something that **cannot be bought for money**. It is about feelings, **empathy**, understanding, **trust**, **care**, **politeness** and **satisfaction**.

There are **short-term** and **long-term** relationships. Some relationships **last** forever from early childhood. Some of them are created for a short period of time. It is the same with marriages. Normally, two people **get married** because they want to spend their whole life together. However, after some time they may find out that their relationship is **weakened** and there are no more reasons why they should live together. The statistics shows that a **high rate of divorce** is caused by love **disappearing**, a lack of **faith** and trust, financial problems and a **dependence** on alcohol, drugs or gambling. Keeping a functioning relationship with a life partner, be-

friends, family members or colleagues is much more difficult than **bringing** one to an end.

A happy marriage represents the ideal human relationship in which each partner feels free to be what he or she is **by nature**. Similar **values**, ethnic backgrounds, interests, IQs, religions and lifestyles are the most important **ingredients** in lasting relationships. A good relationship with parents is also important. Someone still **at war** with his or her parents is probably not ready for peace and **companionship** with a romantic partner. Couples who can discuss **honestly** whatever is important to them – including their relationship – are happier and more likely to have lasting love. Sometimes it may be **painful** to hear that the relationship is not satisfying. But talking about feelings and listening to each other are both **vital** for happiness. In a **fruitful argument**, each partner explains why he or she is **mad** while the other one listens with respect. Long-term happy couples also tend to **argue calmly**. Loss of control, **yelling** or **sobbing** seldom helps **to solve problems**. Successful couples do not **take each other for granted** but work constantly at **rejuvenating** their good feelings for each other.

Friendship is a relationship between people who **have something in common**, spend a lot of time together, **support** and help each other when necessary. Friends are people who laugh together, speak about everything, share **secrets**. They show their true feelings. They accept each other as they are. They look at each other and see a great person, one they love spending time with. Friends are **tied** by memories, tears, laughs and smiles. True friends are people who are always there for you. Friendship is about giving and getting **equally**. The saying “*A friend in need is a friend indeed*” shows the full value of friendship. There is no place for **jealousy**, ignorance and **excuses**. We make friends during all life **stages**. Some friendships last a short time, others for our whole life. If we want to keep our friends for a long time, we should **stay in touch** with them, send e-mails, call them, send **occasional** cards, exercise together or go to lunch **at least once a month**. Some friendships lose importance and **die out**. It happens when friends stop contacting each other or because of **unresolved** arguments. When there is a conflict, it should be **resolved** by confrontation or talking it out.

Besides marriage and friendship, there are other sorts of formal relationships formed among people at school, work and in the streets. Formal relationships are not very **deep** and open. They are formed among people of different social positions: teachers and students, employers and employees, doctors and patients etc. Such relationships **require** respect and a higher level of formality and politeness.

➡ **See also** Unit 1 Family, Unit 13 People and Society, Unit 14 Communication and Languages, Unit 16 The Young and Their World



Questions

1. What types of human relationships are mentioned in the text?
2. Why does the quality of our relationships reflect our personality?
3. Why are relationships difficult nowadays?
4. Why is the family important in terms of human relationships?
5. What are the common reasons for divorce?
6. What makes marriage last?
7. Name the qualities of real friends.
8. Why do some friendships end?
9. What does formal relationship mean?
10. Give examples of relationships which require more politeness.



Websites

<http://www.cyberparent.com/friendship/>
<http://www.homeless.org.au/runaways.htm>



Unit 11

PEOPLE AND NATURE

Nature does nothing uselessly. ♣ Aristotle

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What is the weather like today?
2. Why do seasons change?
3. What do you know about changes in climate?

Climate is the characteristic **condition** of the atmosphere near the Earth's **surface** at a certain place on Earth. It is the **long-term** weather of that area. Climate **determines weather conditions**, seasons and weather extremes like hurricanes, **droughts** or rainy periods. Air temperature and **precipitation** are the two most important factors that determine an area's climate. There are five types of climate. **Moist Tropical Climates** are characterised by their high temperatures during the whole year and by a **large amount of** rain. **Dry Climates** are **known for** their little rain and a **huge** daily temperature **range**. **Humid Middle Latitude Climates** have warm, dry summers and cool, **wet** winters. **Continental Climates** are found in the **interior lands**. Their seasonal temperatures are different and total precipitation is not very high. **Cold Climates** are in areas with permanent ice.

Slovakia has a Continental Climate, with four **distinct** seasons. Winters are normally cold and dry, while **summers tend to be hot** and humid. The average daily temperature in Bratislava is -3° to 2° C in January and 16° to 26° C in July; temperatures tend to be cooler in the mountains. Bratislava receives an average of about 651 mm of precipitation **annually**. In areas of high **altitude**, snow is often present for about 130 days each year. However, some winters we have only very little snow.

Britain has a mild and rainy climate. In winter, cold eastern winds can bring a cold and continental type of weather. The maximum summer temperature is 22 degrees, while the winter temperature is rarely below -7° C. Rain is well-**distributed** over the year. The driest months are from March to June. The coldest months are January and February. The warmest are July and August.

The Earth's climate is dynamic and has been changing since the Earth was formed. There is a tendency for **global warming** all over the world. It causes **rising** temperatures, the **melting of mountain glaciers** and an **expansion** of oceans.

waters. According to scientists, the same trends will continue in the future. There is likely to be a trend towards **increased** precipitation and **evaporation**, more intense **rainstorms** and **drier soils**. More recent studies have suggested that the warming **is likely to occur** more rapidly over the land than the open seas.

Many countries have recently been **hit** by different **natural disasters**: **earthquakes**, fire, droughts, volcanoes, tornadoes, hurricanes, **floods**, tsunami waves etc. One of the **deadliest disasters** in modern history was the Indian Ocean Earthquake known by the **scientific community** as the Sumatra-Andaman Earthquake. It occurred on December 26 in 2004. The earthquake and its tsunami killed more than 283,100 people and devastated **coastal** communities in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and elsewhere. The earthquake in China in 2008 also killed many people.

Plants are an important part in the **cycle of nature**. There would be no life on Earth without them. Animals depend directly or indirectly on plants for their **food supply** because they cannot make their own food. Plants also produce the **oxygen** that we breathe. They use energy from the sun, **carbon dioxide** from the air and water and minerals from the soil. Then, they **give off** water and oxygen. This process is called photosynthesis.

Nowadays, the existence of some plants and animals is in danger. *The Red List of Threatened Species* created in 1963 gives **precise** criteria to evaluate the **extinction** risk and provides a **list of species** that are **in danger**. There are many world-wide organisations that try to save life on the Earth. They try to protect **endangered plant and animal species**.

The **environment** means the **surroundings** in which people, animals and plants develop and exist. The **branch** of biology investigating the relationships between living beings and their environment is called ecology. The most serious ecological problems today are the **pollution** of air, water and soil, the destruction of ecosystems, disappearance of many species of animal and plants, sudden changes in weather, **acid rain**, the global warming, the destruction of **tropical rain forests** and the destruction of the **ozone layer**. Most of this **damage**, which **proceeds** faster and faster, has not been caused by natural catastrophes but by man himself. Technical progress, which enables us to live a more comfortable life, leads on the other hand to the **degradation** of the quality of the environment in which we live.

The growing number of cars **contributes** to air pollution. Factories produce large quantities of carbon dioxide, **lead** poisons and radioactive **particles** which get into the air.

Industrial and city waste, which are **dumped** near lakes and rivers, pollute the soil, water and air and **spoil** the natural scenery. If the destruction of the environment continues, then life on this planet will be endangered. People, animals, birds and plants cannot exist without air, water and soil. Man certainly has the intelligence and the means to solve ecological problems and to save this planet for future generations. In recent years, many environmental organisations have been founded, some of them on international basis, such as *Greenpeace*. The strongest movements for protection of the environment can be observed in the most devel-

oped countries where the people can see and feel the negative consequences of civilization too.

Environmentalists **point to** the most serious ecological problems and try to give their **warnings** the greatest publicity possible through the mass media and public campaigns. Many of their activities have been successful and the growing public attention has made governments **pass** various **laws** aimed at the improvement of the environment. For example, the use of the **pesticide** called DDT was **banned** by law all over the world, **catalytic converters** and **unleaded petrol** in cars are **compulsory** in many countries and most countries have agreed to stop using ozone-destroying chemicals in aerosol sprays.

Concern for the environment should be a part of people's lives. Therefore there is a great need for environmental education. Children of all ages should be taught about man's relationship to nature. They should be educated to have a much better understanding of the fact that this planet, weather, climate, water, air, soil, people, animals, birds and plants create one ecosystem. No part can exist separately. They **are all mutually dependent**. The destruction of any of them can negatively influence the functioning of the whole system.

☞ **See also** Unit 18 Hobbies, Leisure and Lifestyle, Unit 20 Towns and Places, Unit 25 Slovakia – My Homeland



Questions

1. What is climate?
2. What is the tendency for climate changes for the future?
3. Compare the climate in Slovakia and in Britain.
4. What is the Red List of Threatened Species?
5. What is ecology?
6. Which natural disasters are the most dangerous?
7. What is Greenpeace?
8. Which are the most serious ecological problems today?
9. What contributes most to air pollution?
10. Why is the environmental education so important nowadays?



Websites

<http://www.blueplanetbiomes.org/climate.htm>
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/OAR/globalwarming.nsf>



Unit 12

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Science knows no country because knowledge belongs to humanity and is the torch which illuminates the world. ✦ Louis Pasteur

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. Can you imagine your life without a computer or a cell phone?
2. Can you think of any ways that science can be misused? Explain.
3. Explain the quotation of Pasteur.

Science is **systemized** knowledge **gained** through experimentation, **observation** and study. There exist many **fields** of sciences – **natural sciences**, social sciences, environmental sciences and so on. Many **discoveries** (such as the fact that the Earth is not flat) were made through observation. Some discoveries lead to **invention** of object, process or techniques.

Technology (a product of science) is the application of knowledge **to achieve** a practical result. Society depends on technology and technology exists thanks to the needs of society. Technological development changes society. However, our world has not always been like that. The industrial revolution, which started in the 18th century in England, brought a **major** technological change. The economy based on **manual labour** was replaced by an economy dominated by machine manufacturing. The major **achievements** were the invention of **steam** power and **powered machinery**. Since then, technology has become a part of our everyday life.

Society has made **enormous scientific** and technological **progress** in transport, medicine, biology and information technology. We realise this when we compare how people travelled in the 18th century and how they travel now. The progress in the car industry and **aviation** is really **incredible**. In the middle of the 20th century people were able to leave the planet for the first time and **explore the space**.

Great progress has been made in the field of medicine. Science and technology has helped **ease the pain** of certain types of diseases. It has even **cured** and **prevented** some **diseases** that were considered **incurable** in the past. It helps **prolong the life** of people and makes the lives of **the handicapped** easier. Nowadays, it is possible for doctors to help in **surgeries** that are taking place in another

part of the country or even on the other side of the world. The doctor can see the patient and **vital** information about the patient on his video phone and speak directly to the **surgeons performing the operation**.

In the field of biology, especially microbiology, the scientists do not prolong life, but they create it. "**In vitro**" fertilization and cloning are currently **the most debated issues** in this field. The first one presents a technique for the treatment of infertility in which **egg cells** are fertilised outside the woman's body. Cloning an organism means creating a new organism with the same genetic information as a cell from an existing one. This invention of molecular biology can be used for many **purposes**, e. g. to produce organs or **tissues** to repair or **replace damaged** ones. However, many people do not agree with human cloning saying that the **potential for abuse** is very big.

During the last **decades**, we have **witnessed** the biggest **advance** in information and communication technology, especially in **wireless** technology. The most **remarkable** were the inventions of the **cell phone** and the Internet. At the beginning of the 20th century, nobody could have imagined what life would be like at the beginning of the 21st century. Technology **evolves** very quickly and the process is **unstoppable**. Japan and the USA compete to be the first to introduce the "**high-tech**" on the market. The amount of people using mobile phones has **rapidly increased**, especially in the Central and Eastern Europe. Mobile phones have become either a symbol of comfortable, quick communication or a fashion, mainly among **youngsters**. Newer and newer services for cell phones are being developed; many of them **allow** users to download CD quality songs to their wireless phones. The cell phone, the music player, the camera and the **palm** computer are being put together into one little **gadget**. **Current trends** show that the gadgets are getting more and more sophisticated and young people (even children) use them more and more easily.

A computer **skill** is becoming a basic skill acquired early in childhood. Information and communication technologies are also getting more and more **accessible**. Computers have already replaced people in some professions. Some people think that they will replace the teacher one day too. Others argue that computers can only be used in education for acquiring passive knowledge and for testing the knowledge. However, many types of interactive software are developed nowadays and many European universities have even started to offer online study programmes.

Science and technology help us with **minor** everyday work (household appliances) but also with important global issues like saving human lives or exploring space. Without it our lives would be much more difficult and our knowledge restricted. However, science and technology can be misused, as has already happened many times. The car, **for instance**, has made us much more independent but has started to be used for **military** purposes. It has also caused **massive pollution** and the **consumption of fuel** has resulted in conflicts between nations. Almost all the technological inventions can be misused **in one way or another**.

Nuclear power is used in **nuclear power plants** which **generate** electricity. Many organisations, such as the independent, campaigning organisation *Greenpeace*, **pro-**

note alternative ways of producing electricity. The safety of nuclear power plants is **debatable**. They proved to be dangerous in the 1980s of the 20th century in Chernobyl (the Ukraine) where a massive nuclear explosion put the rest of Europe in danger. The inventions of nuclear physics are also used in medicine, both in diagnosis and therapy and in other fields. However, the gun industry, especially nuclear **weapons** have become the most dangerous **threat** to the world we live in.

Technology provokes a **consumer lifestyle**, the opposite extreme of **poverty**. The consumer society has been very **harmful** to the environment and **it does not provide us with a sense of fulfilment**. It forces us to **rely on** material things because we suffer from social, psychological and **spiritual hungers**. It also causes physical damage because this type of lifestyle provokes many diseases.

Scientists will continue to **conduct research** in medicine, microbiology and all the other fields of science. Slovakia has many good **researchers**, but in recent years a lot of highly-qualified scientists, programmers, technicians, doctors and teachers have left the country to find a better-paid job elsewhere in the Western Europe, the USA or Canada. This **phenomenon**, called the **brain drain**, is increasingly becoming a problem in many post-communist countries. It presents a serious **loss** for our country and is caused by **low salaries** and a **lack of job opportunities**. It is therefore very important to improve the economy **as a whole** and create good working conditions, so that this trend does not continue for a very long time.

➞ *See also* Unit 11 People and Nature, Unit 15 Mass Media (The Internet)

? Questions

1. How does technology make our life easier?
2. What did the industrial revolution change?
3. Can you name any examples of scientific research in the field of medicine?
4. What are the biggest challenges for scientific research in microbiology?
5. How can the Internet be misused?
6. Name some examples of pollution caused by technology.
7. How do you adapt to life in a consumer society?
8. What types of cell phones will your children use one day?
9. What is the "brain drain"?
10. Why do technology and science depend on each other?



Websites

<http://www.newscientist.com/home.ns>

<http://www.techbooksforfree.com/science.shtml>

Unit 13

PEOPLE AND SOCIETY



Good manners will open doors that the best education cannot. ✦ Clarence Thomas

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What do you understand by "social behaviour"?
2. Why is ethics taught at schools?
3. What do you know about table etiquette?

Living in a society **requires following certain rules of behaviour**. If we want to be accepted by the society we live in, we should know these rules and try to follow them. Different rules are followed at home, at work, or at **social events**, such as dinners. Other **conventions are kept** when doing business. These rules and conventions concern **appearance** (how to dress for a **particular occasion**) and behaviour (**greetings, addressing people or topics of conversation**).

Ethics is a study of moral rules, norms and **manners**. It analyses what is right and what is wrong. Etiquette, known also as protocol, describes formal rules and traditions of behaviour in a certain society and culture. It **prescribes** the ways in which people communicate with each other and **show their respect for** other people. Modern **etiquette** tells how to **greet** people with warmth and respect, offer **hospitality** to guests, wear clothing **appropriate** for certain occasions, **contribute** to conversations without dominating them, listen to speakers, offer a chair **for** those who need **assistance**, eat **neatly** and quietly, **avoid disturbing** others with loud music or unnecessary noise, **arrive on time** when expected and respond to invitations **promptly**.

The exact rules of social behaviour connected with **hosting** guests, **dining**, clothing etc. are specific for different cultures. What is appropriate in one culture (e. g. in a European country) can be totally **unacceptable** in the other (e. g. in a **Muslim** country). However, there are rules which are universal all around. Everywhere it is important to be polite and to respect local **customs** and people. We say the magic words: "Thank you", "Please", "Sorry", to show interest in other culture, or to ask questions and listen to answers. It is not polite to go to someone's house without **arranging** it first. **It is considered polite** to arrive on time.

too early in case your **host** is not ready) and give him or her a small present. At someone's home, it is not **advisable** to ask for more **unless** your host offers it by asking: "Would you like some more?". Possible answers include "Yes please", "Just a little bit, please", or "That was lovely, but I'm full, thank you". The food etiquette includes some of the following rules: The tea should be **poured** from a **teapot** after a minute or two it has been made. If there are several pieces of **cutlery**, use forks, knives or spoons **on the outside** first. If there is a side **plate** for eating bread rolls, use the plate **on your left-hand side**. Put some butter on the side of the plate, **tear** a piece from the roll and add butter just before eating it. Eat soup quietly, without lifting the **bowl** off the table.

There are people who often have to solve **moral dilemmas**. For doctors or lawyers, for example, it is sometimes not easy to decide what to do to **keep the rules** of ethics.

Nowadays, the **enormous** usage of the Internet has **necessitated** the adaptation of existing **rules of conduct** to create a so called "Netiquette". **This concerns** the writing of e-mails or rules for participating in online forums.

It is extremely important to show children what is right and what is wrong from an early age. Children and young people observe the moral rules **unconsciously** and behave according to what they see. They **pick them up** from their parents, teachers and friends. Parents should therefore be models of appropriate social behaviour. Our family is where our behaviour is formed. If parents speak **rudely**, children will imitate their "models". If parents only have TV dinners, children will not know how to behave at the table. Small things, such as talking to people with respect, listening to them, showing empathy, **praising** the others for their **achievements**, should be common in every family. Their absence leads to **raising ill-mannered** children. Parents should also be careful and "**practise what they preach**".

Rules of social behaviour are also taught at school. At most schools children can attend either the classes of religion or ethics. Both of them try to teach children and young people how to differentiate between **good and evil**, between what is **moral** and what is **immoral**.

The **loss of manners** has become a serious problem in modern societies. Nowadays, many children are educated by the media. The **cartoon characters**, movies, games and music are often rude and violent. Different pseudo-idols from various reality shows influence the **values** of young people. Only people who look good and have a lot of money are considered successful. The **acquired** negative **patterns of behaviour** in childhood are hardly changed later in adulthood. The **huge differences** between how children are raised nowadays and how our parents and grandparents were raised **lead to big generation gaps**.

According to some people, etiquette is a limitation of **freedom of personal expression**. Others think that the same **moral code**, shared by all, makes life easier because many useless **misunderstandings** can be avoided. **Breaking morals** leads to ignorance, **carelessness**, misunderstandings, useless arguments and conflicts with people and the law.

➤ **See also** Unit 1 Family, Unit 14 Communication and Languages, Unit 16 The Young and Their World, Unit 23 Idols and Celebrities



Questions

1. What is ethics?
2. What are the basic rules of modern etiquette?
3. Why is etiquette a limitation of the freedom of personal expression?
4. Where and when is our behaviour formed?
5. Why is the loss of manners a serious problem in modern societies?
6. Who are "ill-mannered" children?
7. How can parents raise their children tolerant, respectful and empathic?
8. How can teachers teach children the rules of social behaviour?
9. Why does etiquette depend on culture?
10. Name three examples of food etiquette.



Websites

<http://www.ukstudentlife.com/Personal/Manners.htm>



Who would possibly say the following sentences during a home visit? Hosts or guests?
Write the answers in the space provided.

Example: Sorry, we are late. We got stuck in a traffic jam.

guests

1. The food was delicious. Thanks indeed.
2. Let me get you another drink.
3. Welcome to our house!
4. May I take your coat?
5. May I help you with the dishes?
6. Shall we? It's getting late.
7. I'll call you a taxi if you want.
8. Here's a small gift for you.
9. Would you like some more soup?
10. Make yourself at home!

Unit 14

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGES



*Without a knowledge of languages you feel
as if you don't have a passport.*

✦ Anton Pavlovich Chekhov

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What are your reasons for learning English?
2. At what age should children start learning a foreign language?
3. Explain the quotation of A. P. Chekhov about knowing languages.

Communication is the act of **exchanging** thoughts, ideas, messages or information through speaking, writing, signals, sounds and **behaviour**. We communicate when we talk, listen, read, write or even look at somebody or something with interest. We all send and **receive** new pieces of information when we talk to somebody about **common** or specific things, explain something, **persuade** somebody, **apologise** for something. Direct communication happens in real time when **participants communicate face to face**. It can also be realised **indirectly** through various communication channels (telephones, contracts, letters, songs, posters, pictures) where **senders** and **receivers** of information do not see each other and do not **necessarily** know each other.

Human communication is a process which **underwent** some historical **development**. In the past, humans exchanged their thoughts in the same way as animals do: through sounds, **facial expressions**, gestures and **body posture**. This was a very primitive and **inefficient** way of communication. Later on, **spreading** information through pictures, signs and finally letters meant **significant** progress in communication development. In the 15th century, after *Johann Guttenberg* had invented printing, written texts were easily spread among people, which increased general education in European countries. The new **inventions** in the 20th century, such as radio, television and computers, **enabled mass communication** among people

through the spreading of information in a very short time. The amount of people using mobile phones **has rapidly increased**, especially in Eastern Europe. Nowadays we can hardly imagine our life without computers. They are an excellent **source** for **storing** and **searching** for information. They have become modern communication partners for many people. However, there is a real **threat** that people will spend more and more time in front of computers which **weakens socializing** and the oral form of communication. It seems that Internet communication leads mostly to the development of written communication. New inventions make communication faster and easier. Who knows how and by what means we will communicate in the future...

Speaking and writing are two forms of communication. Speaking is more or less a **subconscious** process and does not **require** as much concentration as the written form does. Speakers and listeners **interact** in real time. Real-time communication enables listeners to ask for a repetition of information which was not heard or understood. Since the message is expected to be given immediately without much thinking, speech often **contains** many pauses, **fillers** (*actually, well, you know what I mean, right...*) and **hesitation** words (*uhm*). However, their **overuse** can be very **disturbing** for listeners. The intonation of the voice is often **varied** according to the emotions of speakers.

The explanations of messages can also be **accompanied** with a **non-verbal** part of communication, body language. Our facial expressions, eye contact, **gestures**, the movements of our hands, touches, **approximation**, body and overall **appearance** talk for us. They show our feelings and **reveal** our **current mood**. The main role of non-verbal communication is to keep the interest of listeners and **support** explanations.

Non-verbal communication is very specific in different cultures. Politicians, diplomats and business managers practise different social behaviour **in accordance with** the rules written in *Diplomatic Protocol*. The choice of words, grammar and style of communication depends on **formality** and the importance of a communication situation and communication partners. A student would talk to a university professor with respect and would perhaps use formal and polite forms of language. Students **among** themselves would rather use **informal** and usually incorrect language, **filled up** with slang, jargon and sometimes **swear words**. **Breaking grammatical rules** and **leaving out words** which do not **carry** the main meaning is also quite typical for informal communication among the young.

The written form of communication is more complicated and usually more formal. It requires a **precise** choice of words and correct grammar. Written texts can be **stored** and re-read by many people **in the long run of time**. Therefore, they should be well-planned and organised. The **content** and structure of a text should be very clear because there is no possibility for re-explanations of messages which are not understood. In England and in the USA, children at schools take many classes of **writing** where they learn the exact rules for writing essays.

Learning and using foreign languages **makes our life easier**. It helps us communicate with people abroad, make new friends, colleagues and meet business partners.

It is pleasant and easy **to get to know** other countries and new cultures when we speak a foreign language. It increases our **self-confidence** when we are able to read original texts written by famous writers, understand songs and watch films without **subtitles**. These are the personal dreams and goals of many language learners. The integration of Slovakia into the European Union in 2004 **caused** a rapid need for learning foreign languages. English, German, French, Italian and Spanish languages are part of the **curriculum** at secondary schools. Russian language has almost **disappeared** from our schools. English and German are the most learnt and popular languages. People learn them **for various reasons**. Sometimes, it is just a question of fashion and **prestige**. At schools, **it is** usually a **must**. The real **surviving** or **social needs** to speak and understand a foreign language **come up** later. Motivation is a very strong factor that can **ease** the learning process. If students are motivated and they know their real reasons for learning foreign languages, they are more likely to be successful. Formal learning of foreign languages starts at primary schools and continues up to university studies. Nowadays, all students at secondary schools must **take a final exam** in one foreign language. The final language exam tests all language **skills**, such as listening **comprehension**, reading, writing and speaking.

➡ **See also** Unit 10 Human Relationships, Unit 12 Science and Technology, Unit 13 People and Society, Unit 15 Mass Media

? Questions

1. What is communication?
2. How do people communicate?
3. How did people communicate in the past?
4. What are the differences between a written and oral form of communication?
5. What does non-verbal communication include?
6. Why does knowing foreign languages make our life easier?
7. What are the usual reasons for learners to learn foreign languages?
8. What is the difference between learners who *must* learn a foreign language and those who *want* to learn it?
9. What are the advantages and disadvantages of communication face to face and communication via the Internet?
10. What jobs and professions require good communication skills?



Websites

<http://www.ilovelanguages.com/>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/>



Unit 15

MASS MEDIA

TV is chewing gum for the eyes.

✶ Frank Lloyd Wright

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What newspapers do you read?
2. What do people read about in newspapers?
3. What is your favourite TV channel? Why?

In modern society we are in daily contact with different types of **mass media**. We **receive** most of our information through television, **newspaper**, radio or the Internet. These are the media that **reach** a very large **audience**, that is why they are called mass media. They **serve**, first of all, **as** sources of information. They allow us to **follow world affairs** soon after the events happen. In the case of **live broadcasting**, we learn about **current events** as they happen. Most people follow the national and world news regularly to be well-informed. In the case of catastrophes, such as earthquakes or terrorist attacks, the whole world follows the mass media to get the latest information. Many **channels broadcast breaking news** in such situations.

Mass media do not only inform, but they also educate. Documentary programmes take us to places we would never have a chance to see and provide us with information that we would **otherwise** not know about.

Apart from the informative and educative function, the role of mass media is to **entertain**. Thousands of people sit in front of their TV sets at the same time and watch a World Cup final match in football or hockey. People like to relax watching films, **sitcoms**, **soap operas** or **series**; some prefer discussions or reality shows. For many people the TV or the Internet are the only ways of entertaining themselves. The sick, the unemployed, **the disabled** or lonely people normally watch it much more than people who have families or who are busy. On the other hand, there are people who prefer to read, meet others or go out instead of watching TV.

There are children and young people who are **obsessed with** watching the TV several hours a day, which is not healthy either to their mental or physical development. It **damages their eyesight** and prevents them from doing sports or being outside. Watching TV is also connected to the habit of eating too much. It prevents family members from communicating with each other. Many parents

do not have time for their children and TV is a way of "solving" this problem. Watching TV is also one of the reasons why people do not read as many books as they did before.

It is a well-known fact that violence in films influences children and the young in a very bad way. Children also sometimes have problems to differentiate between **fiction** and reality. Some programmes, such as reality shows, create different pseudo-idols and present money or physical beauty as having the highest value in life. This **has a negative impact on** young people's mental development.

Advertising through TV **commercials** has become one of the most effective ways of selling products of different kinds. It helps finance TV channels, especially private ones. Advertising and propaganda on TV influences **viewers** a lot, although they do not realise or admit it.

RADIO, TELEVISION

Slovak television is a public television network that broadcasts on **analogue terrestrial television**, **cable television** and satellite TV. The first channel broadcasts mostly news, political discussions, films, series and children programmes. The second specialises in documentaries, **quiz shows**, educational programmes and music. It also broadcasts live football or hockey matches. These channels broadcast mainly in Slovak but also have special programmes in Hungarian. Foreign language films on Slovak TV channels are mostly **dubbed**, rarely **subtitled**.

Commercial stations, such as *TV Markíza* and *TV Joj*, also **enjoy wide popularity**. Popular series, sitcoms, quiz shows and reality shows also form a part of their programme. The introduction of **people-meters increased the competition** among the channels. In 2001, *TAS*, the first Slovak news channel started broadcasting. Thanks to this channel, Slovaks can watch current news throughout the whole day. Its programmes **cover a wide range of** topics, mostly from economy, politics, technology and sport. Slovaks who receive broadcasting through cable TV can also enjoy watching several Czech channels. Thanks to no language barriers and interesting programmes, they are very popular in our country. Apart from these channels, there exist a number of local channels focusing on local interests. Some TV stations make a **selected content** of their programmes available on their **websites**. In Britain, radio and television broadcasting is provided by the **state-owned BBC** (*British Broadcasting Corporation*), which has a high international reputation for its objectivity. **Besides** the BBC, there are also other radio and TV broadcasters. The BBC has five national radio programmes and several television channels. The BBC's five programmes for radio broadcasting have their specialisations. The famous *BBC World Service* broadcasts across the world in English and many other languages, including Slovak.

There is a **variety of** different types of radio and TV stations in the USA. Most non-commercial radio stations are public and educational stations which are **operated** by colleges and universities and by various religious groups. Hundreds of

radio stations in the USA broadcast in languages other than English for minorities, such as Chinese, French, Japanese, Polish and Portuguese. About 160 radio stations throughout the USA broadcast only in Spanish.

NEWSPAPERS

Most newspapers are **daily newspapers**. They are **aimed at** certain social classes with a certain education and political orientation. *SME* is a daily paper with **nation-wide** distribution that is **widely read** and **influential**. *Pravda* is another widely read paper in our country. The best selling daily, however, is the **tabloid** *Nový Čas* whose **supplements** "*Nový čas víkend*" and "*Nový čas pre ženy*" have become very popular. Economic periodicals include the daily *Hospodárske noviny* and a **weekly** *Trend*. *The Slovak Spectator* is a weekly English language newspaper providing information about Slovakia in English. Most of the newspapers now have their online **editions**, which are becoming more and more popular. Besides these, there are many specialist weekly and monthly lifestyle magazines for men, women and teenagers, for people interested in sports, gardening, cars etc.

The British communication media, press, broadcasting and TV, are among the most influential in the world. There are five **quality** daily papers or broadsheets, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times*, *The Independent* and *The Daily Telegraph* which **contain** a wide variety of national and international news, **reports** from parliamentary debates, **reviews** of the arts, **features** about fashion and sport and business news. Nearly all the papers pay special attention to the reporting of sports, which play an important role in British life. Then there are papers with a high circulation, such as *The Daily Mirror* and *The Sun*, which are "popular papers" or tabloids. They hardly publish any serious material. The articles mostly deal with sex scandals of pop stars.

The largest daily newspapers published in the USA are *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *New York Daily News*, *USA Today* and *The New York Post*, followed by such titles as *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Detroit News* and *The San Francisco Chronicle*. All of these are very serious "quality papers".

THE INTERNET

The Internet presents a true revolution in many areas of our life. It has changed the way we study, work, entertain or communicate with family, friends, business partners and people we do not know. It has made access to any type of information easier. Nowadays, we do not have to use the phone anymore to find out about departures of trains, **opening hours** or details about products or services. We do not depend on encyclopedias or dictionaries to find information. Internet **search engines** and online books and dictionaries are gradually **replacing** them.

It is becoming a must for companies and different institutions and organisations to have their own website. Many professions or services depend on the Internet. **Via the Internet** we send documents, buy things, book hotels, reserve tickets, transfer our money or find life partners.

These days, more and more people use e-mail to communicate and send information or documents. Many Slovaks use the Internet as a form of **entertainment**. Chatting, joining different discussion groups and reading **blogs** is becoming very popular, especially among the young.

Access to the Internet has also become easier in our country. Most schools, companies and institutions have access to it. The high number of Internet providers has decreased the prices of using the Internet. It is becoming normal that Slovaks also **have access to the Internet** at home.

Much discussion concerning the safety of the Internet has been going on in the last few years. Most of them **concern** the **safety** of personal information and the safety of bank transfers. Many hackers get into different computer systems and misuse the **data**. They also create computer viruses which can **destroy** the data completely.

➊ *See also* Unit 5 Shopping and Services, Unit 12 Science and Technology, 14 Communication and Languages

? Questions

1. What do you understand by the term "mass media"?
2. Why does TV have a negative impact on people?
3. What are the most popular newspapers in Slovakia? Describe them.
4. Which are the four most famous British quality dailies?
5. What is a tabloid?
6. Which are the largest quality daily papers published in the USA?
7. In what way did the Internet change our lives?
8. Do all the US radio stations broadcast only in English?
9. What do people use the Internet for?
10. What do you think about Internet safety?



Websites

- www.bbc.co.uk
- www.timesonline.co.uk
- www.washingtonpost.com



Unit 16

THE YOUNG AND THEIR WORLD

Youth is the best time to be rich and the best time to be poor. ♣ Euripides

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. How would you characterise a typical teenager?
2. In what ways are Slovak, British and American teenagers different?
3. Why is puberty a difficult period of life?

Adolescence [Latin: adolescere = "to grow up"] is a **stage of development** between childhood and **adulthood** when a person is biologically adult. His / her physical and psychological development is almost **complete** but emotionally he / she is not fully **mature**. A child becomes an **adolescent** (a person who is **neither** an adult **nor** a child) usually after completing secondary school. People **from the age of thirteen to the age of nineteen** are called "teenagers" because their age ends in "teen" in English.

The **age of majority**, the age at which a person has full legal **rights**, differs from culture to culture. Adulthood is a cultural and social **phenomenon**. In each country, there are different age limits for driving a car, getting married or buying cigarettes.

During **puberty**, most children **go through** dramatic physical **changes** which often begin between the ages of nine and thirteen. Girls usually go through this stage earlier than boys. As puberty **progresses** levels of sex hormones (testosterone and oestrogen) rise. This causes the changes in the **secondary sex characteristics** which **distinguish** the two sexes. Boys grow more **facial hair**, greater **muscle mass** and a deeper voice, girl's breast **enlarges** and their **hips widen**. Their sex organs change and they are able to reproduce.

Adolescents also **undergo** mental **developments**. Their **emotional life** is much more intensive than before and some begin to develop sexual relationships too. Young people often feel **unstable** and look for **security**. Love and friendship become the most important **values**. During adolescence young people often **search for a unique identity**. At this age, sports players, rock stars and film and television performers (e. g. reality show stars) become **role models** for them. Teenagers often

wish to be like their chosen role model. Young people are often **obsessed with** their appearance. They follow the fashion trends closely and always want to be "in". They have similar interests, such as music, dance, film or fashion. They identify themselves with others, but at the same time they want to be different and develop their own individuality. Young people, in general, do not **trust the authorities** and **tend to risk** more. At this age they **are under pressure** because they usually start and complete their secondary education and have to decide about their future career. They need a good education to be **qualified** for the work they choose to do. They are less emotionally **bound** to their parents and prefer relationships with their **peers**. Most of them would like to start their own independent lives but are still financially **dependent on** their parents.

Young people often **struggle to fit** themselves into society. **Unemployment** is the fundamental problem **faced** by young people today. In Slovakia, but also in other countries, many young people experience problems in **obtaining** jobs. This often causes financial worries and frustration. The unstable emotions or lack of emotional intelligence among some adolescents may also lead to **youth crime**. Vandalism and violence **based on** racism are, unfortunately, very frequent in this age group. Groups of youngsters with **racial prejudice** regularly provoke conflicts in many countries. **Addiction**, such as alcoholism, drug use and gambling, is another consequence of frustration, family conflicts or other teenage problems.

Sexual activities often lead to teenage **pregnancy**. Not only can it have a negative effect on a girl's body, but it often ends her education. Teenagers are also not emotionally mature enough or financially able to bring up children. At this age there is also a greater probability of **mental health disorders**, such as depression or even schizophrenia. Girls sometimes develop **eating disorders**, including anorexia or bulimia. The first symptoms of anorexia are: secret **vomiting**, **obsession** with their weight, fanatical exercising and rapid **weight loss**. The **sufferers** of bulimia **overeate** and afterwards they vomit up everything **in order to** be satisfied that they ate something, but at the same time that they did not **put on weight**.

This **age of revolt** often **leads to** conflicts between the generations, called a **generation gap**. Young people are **eager to** become adults, but at the same time have **doubts** and **fears** about **taking on** adult **responsibilities** and freedom. They think that their parents care too much and are **overprotective**. Children often have different ideas about their future and different life **expectations** than their parents do. All this creates **tension** between parents and their children. Older and younger people often do not understand each other because of their different experiences, opinions, habits and behaviour. They differ in clothing and hairstyles but also in more important **matters**, like opinions on drug use or politics. Young people often **rebel** against society – the **Velvet Revolution** in the **former** Czechoslovakia in 1989 was **initiated** by students.

American psychologists say that the **authoritative approach** towards children is not so **common** any more. They say that the generation gap is **shrinking** in many families. There are less and less **strict** authoritative parents and more and more par-

ents that are friends with their children. They **share interests** with their children and they began to be more open. Discussions on **subjects**, such as sex and drugs, are becoming normal. They try to make their children happy – the word “fun” is more frequent than the word “responsibility”. Good parents try to **show sympathy** and understanding towards their children if they are in trouble.

However, many parents have less and less time for their children, who become mature and independent earlier than they did before. There are families in which children and parents do not talk about problems. Such children often feel isolated. In **extreme cases**, they run away from home thinking that the problem will be solved this way. They also run away because they are **neglected**, stressed out, verbally or physically **abused** or sometimes **kicked out**. When children or teenagers cannot talk to their parents, they should try to **address** a friend, an aunt or uncle, grandparents or someone they trust. They should tell them what is happening and ask for their help. In every country there are people whose job is to help kids and teenagers with problems. They are **on their side** and their job is to **protect** them and try to make them happy. Children can **talk to child welfare workers in person** or call **help lines**.

➡ **See also** Unit 1 Family, Unit 8 Education, Unit 10 Human Relationships, Unit 18 Hobbies, Leisure and Lifestyles, Unit 21 Fashion, Unit 23 Idols and Celebrities



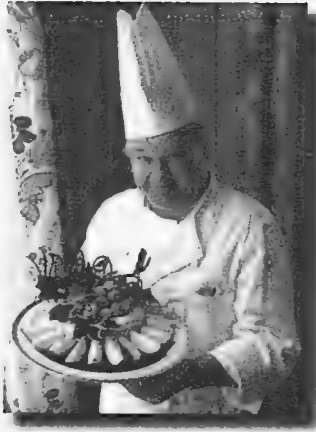
Questions

1. What is adolescence?
2. What is puberty?
3. What physical changes do teenagers normally go through?
4. Name some psychological changes that they go through.
5. Do Slovak parents have an authoritarian approach towards their children?
6. What is a unique identity?
7. Why is puberty an age of revolt?
8. Do you talk to your parents about personal matters?
9. What should the age limit be for buying alcohol?
10. What do you think of teenage pregnancy?



Websites

<http://www.teenagefanclub.com/>
<http://www.scared-of-school.tk/>
<http://www.teenpuberty.com/>



Unit 17

FOOD

Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are. ♣ Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What is your favourite food?
2. Who are vegetarians and vegans?
3. What meals can you prepare?

Normally, we eat three times a day – we have breakfast, lunch and dinner. However, dietologists say that it is healthier to eat more often and have smaller **portions**. **Eating habits** depend on the lifestyle of people. Busy managers do not eat regularly, young people often choose fast food, women who want to lose weight eat as little as possible and kids are often **fussy** about their food. Eating habits also depend on the country we come from or we live in.

Slovaks usually have bread or a **bread roll** with jam for breakfast; some prefer **scrambled eggs** or **sausage**. The English people usually begin the day with a cup of tea or coffee. The traditional English breakfast starts with **cereals** – **porridge** or **cornflakes**, with milk or cream and sugar. Porridge is prepared from **oats** and is very tasty and **nourishing**. This is sometimes followed by fried bacon and eggs or sausages with fried tomatoes, mainly at the weekend. Nowadays most people prefer a lighter meal for breakfast and just have cereal and a cup of tea or coffee, or have no breakfast at all. When we sleep longer than usual, we can have **brunch**, which is an early lunch or late breakfast. Many English people drink several cups of tea and coffee throughout the day. They often drink tea with milk. Slovaks drink less tea but they have own way of preparing coffee (which they call Turkish), although **espresso** is also very popular.

At midday, it is time for lunch. In our country it is the main meal **consisting** of soup, a **main course** and a **dessert**. Slovaks like to eat meat, usually **pork**, **beef** or **poultry** with potatoes or rice. *Bryndzové halušky* (gnocchi with sheep cheese) is considered to be a Slovak traditional meal. Many Slovaks still grow their own vegetables and like to eat them as a **side dish** or main course. Hungarian **cuisine**, typical for **spicy** meals, is quite popular in the southern parts of Slovakia. Italian cuisine

mostly pizza and pasta, has become very popular in our country and in many restaurants it is gradually replacing traditional Slovak meals. Some Slovaks prefer to go to Chinese or Mexican restaurants. Schoolchildren and some people employed in companies or different institutions often have lunch in **canteens**. Businessmen often have lunch or dinner with their business partners in restaurants. Restaurants offer a daily menu **at reduced prices** which people can choose from during lunch-time. In Britain lunch is a **light meal** consisting of a warm **dish** (rarely soup) and a dessert or just sandwiches, some fruit, **pudding** or ice cream. Traditional English cuisine is normally only **served** for Sunday lunch mainly because it takes a long time to prepare. Beef, chicken or **lamb** is served with potatoes, vegetables and **gravy**. A **heavy** dessert normally follows, such as **apple crumble** or **apple pie with custard**.

Dinner, the main meal in Britain, is served in the evening at between 6 and 7 o'clock when all the members of the family are at home. In many **households**, the family is too busy to prepare a **proper** meal or eat together. This meal is often eaten in front of the television. Most dinners during the week are simple, often using **precooked** food with **frozen** vegetables which can be quickly **heated**. Many supermarkets sell frozen "TV dinners" which can be quickly prepared in the **oven** or a microwave. Those people who want to eat at home without preparing the meal, call a restaurant to order **take-away food**. Typical take-way food includes pizza, **curry**, Chinese food and the traditional fish and chips. Take-away pizza is becoming a popular evening meal in Slovakia too, although most families prepare dinner themselves at home. It is either a warm meal or just a sandwich. Some British people have a light **supper**, often cheese and biscuits and a glass of milk or **mug** of cocoa before going to bed.

Recently, there have been great changes in eating habits. English favourites, sausages, fried eggs, bacon and **chips** are now **on decline**. Many people think that too much fat may **cause diseases**, such as diabetes and heart disease. Therefore, they drink more **skimmed milk**, prefer **wholemeal** or brown bread to the white one and eat less butter. They also cut down on meat. Many young people in Britain are now vegetarian, which means that they do not eat meat or fish. Vegetarian food **is easily available** in British shops and supermarkets. Britain's food industry now also produces more **tasty low-fat** food and bioproducts. In our country we also often read or hear about the importance of changing bad eating habits. We **are advised to** eat a lot of fruit and vegetables, food **rich in fibre** and low-fat products with no sugar or cholesterol.

It is very difficult to say what American people prefer for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The United States is a country where many different ethnic groups live and eating habits are very different too. Many dishes which are now popular in the USA **and are considered** typically American, are **of foreign origin**. They were brought to America by Italian, Mexican, Greek, Turkish, Chinese and other people.

Typically, breakfast consists of eggs, toast, juice, fruit, coffee or tea. Many Americans, especially children, have cereals for breakfast. **Pancakes** and muffins are also popular breakfast foods. Some people do not eat any breakfast **at all** but simply have a cup of coffee.

Lunch often consists of a sandwich, often grilled cheese sandwich or “BLT” – bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich. Fast food, such as hamburgers of various types, hot dogs and pizza, are also typically American and popular as lunch food.

Dinner time in the USA **varies** from one part of the country to another. But many people have dinner between 5 and 7 o'clock. Dinner is often the biggest meal of the day. Then there is a dessert, such as apple pie, milkshakes, ice cream or fruit.

Many Americans like to have lunch and dinner “out” – at snack bars, fast food restaurants or more expensive restaurants and hotels. They can also use take-away services. Take-away food is also very popular in the USA.

During holidays and on **special occasions** Americans like to eat **outdoors** with family or friends and have picnics and barbecues. Barbecue parties have also become very popular in our country.

Some British and American recipes

Cabbage soup

Overall timing: 2 hours. To serve 4 persons. **Ingredients:** 225 g onions, 1 garlic, 3 **tblsp.** oil, 350 g beef, 350 g **canned** cabbage, **fennel seeds**, salt, 2 litres **stock**, 125 g bacon, 2 **frankfurters**, **paprika**, flour, water, **sour cream**.

Peel and **slice** onions. **Peel** and **crush** garlic. **Heat** 2 tablespoons of oil in large **saucepan**. Add onions and garlic and **fry over moderate heat** till golden. Cut beef into small **cubes**, add to **pan** and **brown** all over. Add canned cabbage, fennel seeds and salt to the pan. Cover with the stock (made with 2 stock cubes if necessary) and **simmer gently** for 1 hour or till meat is **tender**. **Chop** the bacon. Fry bacon in a frying pan till **crisp**, then add the sliced frankfurters and paprika. Cook for 5 minutes, then **remove** and add to the saucepan. **Blend** flour with cold water in a **bowl** till **smooth**, then **stir** into the soup mixture and cook for further 5 minutes. Stir in the sour cream and serve at once with slices of black bread.

Crème caramel

Overall timing 45 minutes. To serve 6 persons. **Ingredients:** 560 ml. milk, **vanilla pod**, **lemon rind**, 4 eggs, 125 g sugar.

Preheat the oven to 180 °C. Put the milk, vanilla pod and lemon rind in a saucepan and **bring to the boil**. Remove from heat and lift out the vanilla pod and lemon rind. In a bowl, **beat eggs** with half sugar and gradually **pour** in the hot milk, stirring **constantly**. **Melt** the **remaining** sugar in a saucepan over a moderate heat till golden brown. Divide between six small **moulds** and turn them so the caramel **coats** the **bottoms** and sides. **Strain** the **custard** mixture into the moulds and place them in a **roasting tin** half-filled with hot water. **Bake** for 45 minutes. **Allow** to cool in moulds and **chill** before **turning out**.

Gingerbread

Overall timing: 1 hour and 30 minutes. Ingredients: 225 g flour, 1 **tsp** bicarbonate of soda, 1 **tsp. ground ginger**, 126 g **golden syrup**, 75 g butter, 50 g brown sugar, 2 eggs, 2 **tbsp.** milk.

Preheat the oven to 170 °C. **Sieve** flour, soda and ginger into a bowl. Place golden syrup in a saucepan with butter and brown sugar. Heat till melted. Beat eggs and milk. Add melted **ingredients** to dry ingredients. Mix to a **thick batter**. Pour into a **greased square tin**. Bake for one hour.

➡ *See also* Unit 3 Sports and Games, Unit 6 Health Care

? Questions

1. What does the traditional English breakfast consist of?
2. What do the Slovaks have for lunch?
3. Is lunch the main meal of the day for the English?
4. What do the Americans prefer for breakfast?
5. Why are eating habits different in various parts of the USA?
6. Explain the expression *fast food*.
7. What are take-away services?
8. How would you prepare your favourite meal?
9. What do dietologists advise us to eat to stay healthy?
10. Have you ever tried to change your eating habits?



Websites

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/>

<http://www.allrecipes.com>

<http://www.recipesource.com>



Unit 18

HOBBIES, LEISURE AND LIFESTYLES

I would not exchange my leisure hours for all the wealth in the world.

✦ Comte de Mirabeau

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. Which traditional hobbies do Slovaks practise?
2. Do you keep a pet? If so, how do you look after it?
3. Which sports do you practise as a hobby?

Free time after work or study is called **leisure time**. It is the time for fun and **entertainment**, such as watching TV or **going out**. Many people spend their leisure time practising their hobbies. There are many types of hobbies. One of the traditional ones is the collecting of objects – **stamps**, picture postcards, **badges**, **flags**, **coins**, model cars or ships and other things. Collecting can become a **life-long** hobby for many people. It is an international hobby too. There are collectors' clubs all over the world. They often meet to **exchange** the things they collect. However, this hobby is gradually becoming **old-fashioned**.

Teenagers have their own special leisure interests which **form part of** their youth culture. These include playing team sports, dancing at a favourite disco, going to parties or joining some clubs. They like to spend their leisure time actively in groups, **in good company**. Those who prefer staying at home usually watch DVDs, listen to music, **browse the Internet** or chat on the Internet. Typical teenage sports are **roller-skating** and skateboarding. Skateboarding as a sport first appeared in California in the 1960s and since that time it has **spread** rapidly around the world. Skateboard parks have opened up in big cities for the safe **enjoyment** of this hobby. Slovak skateboarders, roller skaters and cyclists often **complain about** not having enough places to practise their hobbies, although in the last few years new **cycle paths** have been built. Many children and young people join different clubs where they practise their hobbies. The most popular are football, tennis, dance or **horse riding** clubs. Sometimes, it is not their **choice** but the choice of their parents, who want them to have interesting hobbies. Some parents **force** their children to **play an instrument** or do some sport because they think they will **prevent** them from taking drugs or drink-

ing alcohol. Others **failed** to become musicians or sportsmen themselves, so they want their children to **achieve** these **aims**.

Older people prefer gardening, fishing, reading, going to the theatre, concerts or **art exhibitions**. Slovak **pensioners** are quite traditional and prefer staying at home and do not travel as much as American **retired** people.

A lot of people, both children and adults, **keep a pet** – a dog, a cat, a goldfish, a **canary**, a **parrot**, a **guinea pig** or other more exotic animals. To **care for** a pet well **requires** a good **knowledge** of its **habits** and **behaviour**. The British people love animals and many families have a pet, usually a cat or a dog which becomes part of the family. In Slovakia dogs and cats are also quite popular. However, it is still not easy to find a hotel where you can stay with a dog.

Many British people also love gardening. It is still one of the most popular hobbies. They prefer living in small houses **rather than** flats. The slogan "An Englishman's home is his castle" is true for many British people. Do-It-Yourself or just **DIY**, doing practical jobs around the house, has become a very popular hobby. People like to redecorate their houses or to **repair** pieces of furniture and **household appliances**. There are people who like to repair their cars by themselves, others do some **cooking** etc. In Britain a large number of books are published every year giving step-by-step instructions on how to make or repair things. We can say that Slovaks also like gardening and they do jobs around the house themselves. However, we do not have as many evening classes that are organised for those who want to learn the **basics** of these activities as they have in Britain.

Many people have creative hobbies, such as **acting**, **choir singing**, folk dancing and playing pop-music in **amateur groups**. Photography, **painting** and **drawing** are also popular hobbies. There are many opportunities for people to **develop their talents** in these **areas**.

At present, more and more people of all ages are **concerned with** their health and spend some of their leisure time doing exercises to keep themselves fit. For this reason many sports and games are practised as hobbies. **Hiking**, cycling, **rowing**, playing golf and tennis are enjoyed by people all over the world. It is quite **common** to see parties of hikers, cyclists or rowers spending their weekends **outdoors**. For those who prefer physical exercises **indoors**, bodybuilding and fitness centres are opening up all over the world. They help people stay healthy and fit. This can also be achieved by walking, jogging, swimming and doing aerobics, which are also useful, effective and very popular ways of spending leisure time.

Finally, there is a group of exclusive sports which are practised as hobbies by a limited number of people. **Hot-air ballooning** is a fascinating **though** very expensive hobby. Therefore, the clubs of hot-air ballooning try to get sponsors to **pay expenses**. It may also be a dangerous hobby when the weather is not stable and the wind is too strong. **Skydiving** also depends on this. Another increasingly popular hobby is **hang-gliding**. People enjoy flying over the **countryside** in complete silence and fresh air. Another exclusive hobby is wind-surfing practised on lakes and on the sea. A relatively **recent** sport which has already **attracted attention** of a **number**

of young people is snow-boarding which combines several sports – skiing, surfing and skate-boarding. Snow-boarding is becoming increasingly popular in our country. Many skiers have become snow-boarders and practise this sport in the Slovak or Austrian mountains. Some Slovaks **got to like** expensive sports that are not so common in our country and they often travel abroad to practise them. This includes playing golf, yachting or **scuba diving**.

Hobbies are connected to lifestyles. Some people like **to be on their own** and learn new things by reading books or participating at **cultural events**. Others enjoy **company** and often go out or do collective sports. It is important to choose hobbies that **fit** our character and **complement** well our work or study. We do them because we need to relax and want to have a good time. However, there are more and more workaholics in our country who **gave up** their hobbies to be able to work all the time. Psychologists **consider** this to be a very negative **phenomenon**.

➡ **See also** Unit 2 Culture and Arts, Unit 3 Sports and Games, Unit 7 Travelling, Unit 15 Mass Media, Unit 16 The Young and Their World, Unit 21 Fashion, Unit 22 The Book – the Friend of People

Questions

1. What is leisure time?
2. How do most young people in Slovakia spend their leisure time?
3. How can the people spend their leisure time at home?
4. Give the names of some traditional hobbies.
5. Why do you think the keeping of pets is an interesting hobby?
6. Explain the slogan "An Englishman's home is his castle".
7. Name some creative hobbies.
8. Which hobby do you practise to develop your talent for arts?
9. What are typical teenage hobbies?
10. Which hobbies can be dangerous?



Websites

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobby>



Unit 19

MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

To live anywhere in the world today and be against equality because of race or color is like living in Alaska and being against snow. ✦ William Faulkner

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What does multicultural society mean? Can you give any examples?
2. What are the positives of multiculturalism?
3. What are the problems resulting from multiculturalism?

The term **multiculturalism** was used for the first time in connection with Switzerland. It describes a society **composed of** different cultural groups which create a “cultural mosaic”. Cultural groups living in a multicultural society try to **preserve** their **unique** cultures. Cultural differences are **mutually** respected and tolerated. This is the official **policy** of Canada, Australia and the UK. The United Kingdom receives a large number of **immigrants** every year; London has become a true cosmopolitan city. Canada is known for its English-French bilingualism but is **selective** about who may enter the country and who may not. Multiculturalism includes **dual citizenship**, use of **minority languages** and support of their culture and religion.

Many people think that multiculturalism can **destroy** the **national sovereignty** of the country and they prefer the idea of a “**melting pot**” that mixes and integrates the cultural groups. These countries **aim at** the social integration of immigrant groups into the national culture. This is called cultural **assimilation** and it is **in contrast to** multiculturalism. A typical example of a “melting pot” is the USA, often **celebrated** for its multicultural **diversity**. Immigrants preserve their own culture and family background while also becoming Americans. Assimilation can sometimes have a negative **impact** on national minorities – in the extreme cases, the **distinctive features** of the original culture can be minimised or even disappear.

The majority of the Slovak population is Slovak. The country also has several minorities, the biggest of which are Hungarian, **Roma**, **Ruthenian** and **Ukrainian**. A minority can be defined as an **ethnic**, **racial**, religious or other group forming a **whole**, different from the **majority** of the population in a country. The Roma population in Slovakia has found it difficult to **adapt** and is often the **victim** of racist attacks. There exist a number of projects to **facilitate** the integration of this ethnic group into the society.

Since 1989, quite a lot of Slovaks have been leaving the country to find a better-paid job elsewhere in Western Europe, the USA or Canada. In 2004, Slovakia became a part of a larger community – the European Union. Some countries, such as the United Kingdom or Sweden, decided to open up their **labour market** to workers from the 10 countries which have joined the EU. Some other countries **imposed** so called “labour market **restrictions**”, which **prevent** Slovaks **from** working legally in these countries. Some of them will gradually open the labour markets in the near future. Slovakia has also received immigrants from other countries. Not many of them stay in Slovakia; the majority want to move to Germany or other western European countries.

Thanks to the open **borders**, Slovaks have also been travelling much more than before. They have been learning foreign languages and **discovering** new cultures. Cultural **exchanges** are usually very **beneficial** and they can change the lives of people in a very positive way. People learn about other cultures, find new friends, get more tolerant and realise that difference is positive and not something they should be afraid of. There are Slovaks who have decided to stay abroad; a lot of them got married in a foreign country, creating **bicultural** families. They try to adapt to the foreign culture as soon as possible – learn the language, make new contacts, find a job and sometimes get a new qualification.

Cultural adaptation is more difficult when immigrants have to adapt to completely different cultural **values** or religion. Lack of cultural integration (on the part of the immigrants or the **host** country) can cause the isolation of immigrant minorities. This can provoke reactions of **xenophobia** and **racism** which can **lead to** serious **incidents**. **Urban violence** in France in 2005 caused by frustration among **ethnic minorities** over racism and unemployment, is an example. A series of **riots** and other forms of **violent clashes** between gangs (some of **Muslim** or north African backgrounds) and the French Police in the poor **suburbs** of Paris involved the burning of cars and public buildings. In recent years, we have unfortunately, **witnessed** several serious cultural and religious clashes in the form of terrorist attacks in the USA, Spain, the U.K. and other countries. In 2006, there were series of protests in different Muslim countries against the Mohamed Cartoons published in Danish newspapers. The publication of these caricatures provoked a clash between the Muslim world (its religion) and Western civilisation (its freedom of speech).

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Public holidays in Great Britain are called “bank holidays”. All the banks, offices, schools, shops and factories close on these days, although it is becoming more common for supermarkets to **remain** open. Bank holidays include the following days: *New Years Day*, *Good Friday* and *Easter Monday* (Easter holidays), *Whit Monday* (seven weeks after Easter), *August Bank Holiday* (the last Monday in August), *Christmas Day* (December 25th) and *Boxing Day* (December 26th).

Good Friday is the Friday before Easter. It **marks** the anniversary of Christ's crucifixion. *Whit Monday*, seven weeks after Easter, is a Christian festival celebrated **in commemoration of** the coming of the **Holy Ghost**. Easter is the typical spring holiday. In the United States, children like this holiday very much because the Easter Bunny comes with coloured chocolate eggs and candies. Families often paint eggs and decorate Easter trees with them.

Christmas is the most beautiful of all the holidays both in Britain and in Slovakia. Many popular traditions and customs make it an exciting and fascinating time. Special Christmas decorations, coloured lights and Christmas trees can be seen in the streets and shops. Homes are often decorated long before Christmas with **holly**, **ivy** or **mistletoe**. **Christmas carols** are sung almost everywhere, in houses, cathedrals and churches. In Slovakia carol singers mostly sing in the villages. People buy presents and send Christmas cards to their relatives and friends. In Slovakia people open their presents which they find under the Christmas tree on December 24th. In Britain, children hang their **stockings at the foot of the bed** for Santa Claus (Father Christmas) to fill them. On the morning of *Christmas Day*, December 25th, the children get up early to open their Christmas presents. Families have a traditional Christmas dinner: in Britain it is **stuffed turkey** and Christmas pudding afterwards. In Slovakia it is fish (usually **carp**) with potato salad. The following day is *Boxing Day* (December 26th) when many people visit other members of their families. In Slovakia people also visit their families on this day.

New Year's Eve (December 31st) is **neither** a public holiday in Slovakia, **nor** in England. People go to work as usual. But on New Year's Eve most Slovaks and English stay up till midnight to see the New Year coming. Many go to parties and dances. In England *New Year's Day* is a bank holiday. People make **resolutions** and promises to change or improve their future lives. In Slovakia many people spend this time in the mountains with friends and families.

Christmas celebrations are much the same all over the United States. Many other religious holidays are also celebrated in Britain and America, as both countries have immigrants from many other cultures. **The most known** of these are *Hanukkah*, the Jewish festival of lights, which is held in December, and the *Chinese New Year*, which is held at the end of January or beginning of February.

February 14th is *St. Valentine's Day* when friends and lovers send one another letters or greeting cards expressing their love and affection. *Saint Valentine* was a **bishop**, a Christian **martyr**, **murdered** by **Romans** around the year 273. Before he was put to death, he sent a note of friendship to his **jailer's** daughter. This holiday has been imported to our country and every year is becoming more and more popular. There is a wide choice of Valentine cards available at stationer's shops. Some of them are serious, romantic, others humorous, sentimental, even satiric or provocative.

November 5th, *Guy Fawkes Night*, **has its roots in** English history. It goes back to the year 1605 when a group of Catholics wanted to kill *King James I* at the opening of Parliament by **blowing up** the Houses of Parliament with **gunpowder**. One of them, *Guy Fawkes*, was caught **planting** the explosives and they were all **executed**.

To commemorate the event, there are **bonfires** and **fireworks** in almost every town and village in Britain. Children are allowed to stay up until dark and admire the **rockets** in the sky.

One of the most important public holidays in the USA is the *Fourth of July* or *Independence Day*. It celebrates the independence of American colonies from the British. It is the **anniversary** of the signing of the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776. The oldest American holiday is *Thanksgiving Day* which is the fourth Thursday in November. It was celebrated for the first time in 1621 as an **expression** of the people's **joy** after the first successful **harvest** which helped the colony at Plymouth to survive the winter. *Memorial Day*, celebrated on May 30th in most states, and *Veteran's Day* are patriotic holidays which commemorate Americans who fought in wars for their country. On these days, the people visit **cemeteries** and **memorials** to **honour** those who **sacrificed** their lives for America. The birthdays of two great American presidents, *Abraham Lincoln* and *George Washington*, are celebrated on February 17th, which is *President's Day*. Another of the most important events in American history was the discovery of the continent by *Christopher Columbus* on October 12th, 1492 which is celebrated by *Columbus Day*. *Halloween* is a typical American holiday celebrated on October 31st. According to an old tradition it is a **witches'** holiday. It is popular with both young and old people who dress themselves in **fancy** costumes and go to parties to have fun.

In Britain, there also exist holidays named after the **saints**, such as *St. Patrick's Day*, *St. Andrew's Day*, *St. David's Day* and *St. George's Day*. The most famous is the national holiday of the Irish people *St. Patrick's Day* (March 17th), named after St. Patrick, the **patron saint** of Ireland, who brought **Christianity** to this country. Many people **worldwide** dress in green, eat Irish food and drink Guinness. *St. Patrick's Day* **parades** are held in many towns and cities in Ireland or the USA.

➡ See also Unit 14 Communication and Languages, Unit 24 English-Speaking Countries

? Questions

1. Which countries promote multiculturalism?
2. What is a "melting pot"?
3. What is cultural assimilation?
4. Which minorities live in Slovakia?
5. How can you profit from cultural exchanges?
6. Can Slovaks work legally in all the countries of the EU?
7. What can the isolation of immigrants cause?
8. How do you celebrate Halloween and St. Valentine's Day?
9. What are the most important public holidays in the USA?
10. Describe the most famous holiday named after a saint.



Unit 20

TOWNS AND PLACES

My home is not a place, it is people.

✦ *Lois McMaster Bujold*

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What places in Slovakia would you show to foreign tourists?
2. Where would you like to spend your summer holidays? Why?
3. Why do people move from place to place?

The place where we are born is called a place of birth. It is written on our **birth certificate**, our **ID card** and passport. The place where we grow up, strongly influences our character and **behaviour**. Many important relationships are created there. The place of our studies is often not **identical** with our place of birth. Nowadays, most young people choose to study in a different town (or even country). It **allows** them to be more independent, to learn to take care of themselves and meet new people. **However**, some students prefer to study in their hometown for financial reasons.

There are many beautiful places in the world where people would like to live or **at least** spend their holidays. Some people like **pure** nature and **peaceful** countryside. Others prefer the **hectic** life in **crowded** towns and cities.

A **town** is a **residential** community of people **ranging** from a few hundred to several thousand. It is larger than a village but smaller than a city. A **city** usually **consists of** residential, industrial and business areas together with administrative functions. The majority of a city area is primarily **taken up** by housing. **Skyscrapers**, **housing estates**, business and shopping centres are built in all major cities. **Infrastructure**, such as roads, streets and **public transport routes** (metro rail system), are usually well-developed too.

A **global city**, also known as a world city, is the main centre of **trade**, banking, finance, innovations and markets. Whereas **megacity** refers to any city of **enormous** size, a global city is one of enormous power or **influence**. The four traditional global or world cities are London, New York, Paris and Tokyo.

A **suburb** is the place with houses and other buildings (e.g. church, school, public buildings, a few shops), usually smaller than a town. It is usually situated **on the outskirts of** the city.

A *village* is normally found in **rural** areas out of a town or a city where people live. It is usually larger than a **hamlet** and smaller than a town or city. A *hamlet* is a small **settlement**, too small or unimportant **to be considered** a village.

Nowadays, it is quite normal for people to live in different places during their life. They move from place to place from various reasons. The most frequent ones are jobs, studies or marriage. Moving is often connected with personal and social life. Adaptation to a new place and **assimilation** among new people may take some time. On the other hand, there are people who spend all their life in one place. They do not have any social, personal or financial **needs** to change their home.

From time to time, we all leave our homes when we travel away for holidays. There are many beautiful places in the world. Some of them are surprising, **inspiring** and exciting. The most beautiful cities of the world are Prague, Barcelona, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Jerusalem, London, New York, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco, Venice and many others. They offer a lot of **excitement**, possibilities for sightseeing, shopping in the most luxurious shops, going to restaurants, casinos, night clubs. The Hawaiian Islands, the Seychelles and the Pacific Islands are called "**paradise**" places. They are preferred by those who look for the exotic and relaxation. The **unbounded** country of the Alps, New Zealand, Coastal Norway and Tuscany offers a lot of **adventure**. The Antarctica, Amazon, Canadian Rockies, Galápagos, Grand Canyon and Sahara belong to the most beautiful **wild** places. They are favourite especially among nature lovers. The **wonders** of the world, such as The Acropolis, The Giza Pyramids, The Great Wall, Angkor, Machu Picchu and The Taj Mahal, are perhaps the most **mysterious** places in the world.

Slovaks spend their holidays either in Slovakia or abroad. When they choose to go abroad for holidays, they usually contact a travel agency. They choose a **seaside resort** from a catalogue and the travel agent gives them all the necessary information about the stay. During their holidays they communicate with a **guide** who represents the travel agency.

Slovakia also offers many interesting places for relaxation. Beautiful **sceneries**, **caves**, **roaring waterfalls** and **vast plains** attract many domestic and foreign tourists. The *High and Low Tatras* are great for spending active holidays during the whole year. **Hiking**, skiing, **cross country skiing**, cycling and horse riding are very popular among the tourists there. *Podbanské* is one of the best known **tourist centres** with hotels, shops, skiing centres, restaurants and cultural **sites**. *Tatranská Lomnica* offers a variety of **accommodation**, **ski slopes**, casinos, fitness centres, a **horse-racing track** and many other activities for tourists. *Veľká* and *Malá Studená Dolina*, with its waterfalls, is one of the most beautiful places for hiking. *Jánska Dolina* with thermal swimming pools, *Chopok* (the second highest **peak**), *The National Park of Low Tatras*, *Kráľova Hoľa*, *Demänovská Dolina* and *Demänovská Ice Cave* are the most visited places. Slovakia is also famous for its many mineral and **thermal springs**. In 2004, storms **devastated** almost one third of the forests in the *High Tatras National Park*. To **repair the damage** it is possible to **replant** the forests or let nature itself **regenerate** it.

Trenčianske Teplice, Bardejov, Sliač, Dudince, Smrdáky and open air spas in the mountains of *Štrbské Pleso* and *Nový Smokovec* are annually visited by thousands of patients and visitors. The most famous **spa** is in *Piešťany*, with **mud bath** procedures. Besides nature, Slovakia offers many interesting places for sightseeing. The most beautiful castles are in *Orava, Spiš, Trenčín, Zvolen* and *Bojnice*. *Levoča*, an old town, is very famous for beautiful wooden creations made by the **woodcarver** Master Paul. "The gold town" *Kremnica* and the "silver town" *Banská Štiavnica* are famous for their **mining** history. Slovakia also offers many cultural events to tourists. The folklore festivals in *Východná, Detva, Myjava* and **elsewhere** reflect cultural traditions **preserved** through folk songs and dances.

➡ **See also** Unit 4 Housing, Unit 24 English-Speaking Countries, Unit 25 Slovakia – My Homeland

For more information about LONDON, NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, SYDNEY and BRATISLAVA see page 348 (Additional texts).

? Questions

1. What is the difference between a town and a city?
2. Name three examples of world cities.
3. What are the advantages of life in towns and cities?
4. What are the disadvantages of life in towns and cities?
5. How does life in countryside differ from town life?
6. What are the reasons for some people to move to a new place?
7. Which cities of the world would you like to visit?
8. Which world places would you recommend nature lovers to see?
9. What does Slovakia offer to tourists?
10. If you could choose a new place to live, where would it be?



Websites

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler/intro.html>



Unit 21

FASHION

Fashion is something that goes in one year and out the other. ♡ Author Unknown

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What clothes are you wearing now?
2. Who do you dress up for?
3. Explain the old saying "Clothes make the man".

Fashion is the way of dressing that is popular at certain time. It is the main **concern** of all people who want to be "in". Fashion changes very fast and sometimes it is quite difficult to say what is still trendy or what is already **out of fashion**. People can **follow new fashion trends** through fashion magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *Vogue* or from fashion shows.

Fashion is created by professionals called fashion designers. They invent new styles, **patterns** and look for new, interesting combinations. Names, such as *Calvin Klein*, *Gianni Versace*, *Giorgio Armani*, *Emanuel Ungaro*, *Vivienne Westwood*, are known all over the world. New models are presented at fashion shows and inspire many fashion-lovers.

People's **attitudes** towards fashion are quite different. Some people care a lot about themselves. They are willing to **spend a fortune on** clothes in **brand name** clothes shops and boutiques often called after fashion designers or famous people. On the other hand, there are people who are not interested in fashion at all. They wear clothes according to their own **taste** and their own style. Finally, there are those who want to be "in" but **cannot afford** to buy expensive and brand name clothes. Therefore, they buy imitations or cheaper clothes in **markets** or in second-hand shops. Sometimes, **it is worth waiting** for good **sales** which are often after Christmas and in summer.

A few years ago, the possibilities to follow fashion were quite limited in Slovakia. Shops were only selling a few models. Therefore, many women **sewed** the clothes themselves. Nowadays, people prefer **ready-made** clothes instead of making them or having them made by **tailors** and **dressmakers**. If women want to have a **unique dress for a special occasion**, such as a **ball**, they often go to dressmakers and **have their dress made**. Men often have their suits or coats made. Some people go to **tailors** to have their old clothes repaired or **adjusted** to the latest fashion. Tailors take **measurements** of the **entire** body: **waist**, **hips**, **sleeves** and **bust**. Customers

choose the **cut**, **design**, material and a pattern of cloth. Before the clothes are ready, customers must try them on a few times so that they **fit** perfectly. The finest tailors **can charge** you a lot of money for designing and sewing.

Besides styles, materials and designs, **length** and **width** of clothes are the main indicators of changes in fashion. Long skirts have been **alternating** with short ones, **wide** trousers with **narrow** ones. The good thing about fashion is that we can always expect some comebacks. What is **old-fashioned** today, may look romantic and trendy in a few years. However, fashion never quite repeats in the same way. Nowadays, many teenagers have found out that their fashion is quite similar to the times of their parents. Even the materials and designs are **very alike**.

The old saying that "*Clothes make the man*" is very true in the sense that clothes **reveal** people's origin, religion and even financial situation. They **indicate** their status in society.

In some religions, the way of dressing is one of the signs of **faith**. Islamic women have to wear long, dark clothes and **veils** to cover their whole body. Men are expected to wear a **tunic**. Another example is the Amish population in Lancaster County, USA. They **follow** a set of unwritten **rules** that **prescribe** behaviour, **appearance** and other aspects of their culture. Their style of dress is symbolic of their faith. Amish men wear **dark-coloured** suits, **straight-cut** coats, wide trousers, black socks and shoes and black or **straw hats**. Amish women wear **modest** dresses made from single-coloured **fabric**. The dresses are usually made with long sleeves and a full skirt and covered with a **cape** and **apron**. Their hair is never cut but is worn in a **bun** on the back of the head. Amish women **are not permitted** to wear **jewellery** or printed fabric.

Such limitations would mean total **disaster** for the modern man and woman. If we all got dressed in the same way **in accordance with** some rules, fashion would never develop and most fashion designers would become jobless.

Fashion is also a way of **self-expression**, especially for young people. They can show their mood, interests, attitudes and status in society through styles, colours, patterns, materials and **accessories**. For others it is a need to copy their ideal model by imitating his/her appearance. The young often experiment with different combinations of colours and designs to show their freedom, beliefs and feelings. Some of them are very **inventive** and they can even inspire professional designers with their **extraordinary excesses**.

The most popular clothes among the young are jeans. Different styles and cuts have been worn by generation after generation. **Casual clothes**, such as **baggy** trousers, **loose sweatshirts** and baseball caps (usually back to front), are still very popular. Sports clothes like **tracksuits** and **sneakers** have also been **fashionable** among the young.

The way we dress is **undisputedly** connected with the weather. In summer, we all prefer **light** and **airy** materials, such as **cotton**, **silk**. We wear **short-sleeved** or **sleeveless** shirts, T-shirts, loose blouses with a low **neckline** and skirts **gathered** at the waist or **bell-shaped** trousers, shorts or Bermuda shorts, sandals and **slip-**

pers. Flip-flops have recently become the biggest fashion trend. When we go swimming, we wear a **swimming costume** (bikini, one-piece or two-piece) or **trunks**, sometimes a beach **gown** and a straw hat. In winter, warmer materials, such as cotton, **wool** and nylon are preferred. Long-sleeved T-shirts, shirts, **sweaters**, **jumpers**, **pullovers**, **cardigans**, **polo necks**, jackets, **anoraks**, coats, **mittens**, **gloves**, hats, caps, **scarves** and boots are worn.

People dress differently for various **occasions**. Formal situations, such as public parties, balls and banquets **require** formal, **smart** clothes. Women take special care of being **dressed-up** and looking good at such occasions. Some of them are willing to spend a lot of money on unique ball dresses, shoes, accessories, decorative items and jewellery (**necklace**, **bracelet**, **earrings**, **rings**). Ladies' **handbags** should **match** their dresses and shoes. Gentlemen are expected to wear a dark **suit** or **tuxedo**, a white shirt with **cuff links**, a single colour **bow tie** and dark shoes.

Not only special occasions require special clothes. In some jobs people wear uniforms, white **coats**, **costumes**, aprons. In some private British schools children have to wear uniforms too. They are often hated by children, especially by girls. The main reason for wearing them is to hide social and financial differences among children.

The perfect **outfit** of a person is not only achieved through clothes and accessories. Another important part of our image is hair. Nowadays, there is great freedom in hairstyles and colours. Some people **grow their hair long**, have **highlights** done, while others have their hair very short, **spiky** and often **dyed**, highlighted or **bleached**.

All clothes require special care if we want to wear them for a longer time. Therefore, we should follow the washing and **ironing** instructions on the clothes **labels**. Some clothes wash easily, others require **dry cleaning** or must be washed only by hand. If they are washed in a washing machine on a high temperature, they can **shrink** or become larger. **Greasy stains** can be washed with **stain removers**. The worst happens when coloured clothes are washed together with white ones. If we are not sure how to care about certain clothes, the best thing to do is go to a local **laundrette** and have them washed and ironed there.

➞ **See also** Unit 5 Shopping and Services, Unit 16 The Young and Their World, Unit 23 Idols and Celebrities

? Questions

1. Who is fashion created by?
2. Why is fashion expensive for common people?
3. What are people's attitudes towards fashion?
4. Why is it important for people to look good?
5. How is clothing connected with weather?
6. What do men and women wear for special occasions?
7. Why do people go to tailors?
8. Why is fashion a way of self- expression, especially for young people?
9. Why is hair also an important part of our image?
10. What care do clothes require?



Websites

- <http://www.fashion.net>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/fashion/>
- <http://fashion.about.com/>



Unit 22

THE BOOK – THE FRIEND OF PEOPLE

A book is a garden you can carry in your pocket. ♣ Arabian proverb

A book gives knowledge, but it is life that gives understanding. ♣ Hebrew proverb

Never judge a book by its movie. ♣ J. W. Eagan

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. What kinds of books do you like to read and why?
2. Why do some people prefer films to books?
3. Why do people read less than they did before?

Our first books are usually read to us by our parents or grandparents. These are **fairy tales** or stories and they **normally** have more pictures than text. They take children to the world of fantasy and teach them to **distinguish good from evil**. The **children's books** by *Hans Christian Andersen* and the *Brothers Grimm* are popular **worldwide**. English classic children's books like *Alice in Wonderland* (**written by Lewis Carroll**) and *Winnie the Pooh* (written by A. A. Milne) are read and loved by many generations of English children.

Nowadays, people in Slovakia can read both original Slovak books and books **translated from** different languages, **mainly** English. They read both **fiction and non-fiction genres**. Boys usually read **adventure stories** or science fiction. Girls prefer **romances** or **novels**. Many young Slovaks have started to read in English. There exist a lot of English books that are **simplified** and are not difficult to read for **non-native speakers of English**. Adults like to read detective stories, **historical novels** or **books of travels**. Some also read non-fiction genres, such as **biographies** or **scientific papers**. There are people who enjoy reading **poetry**. There are not many of them because this genre **is not easy to read**. **Speculative fiction** for adults and **fantasy series** for children have become very popular genres in recent years. People also enjoy watching **film versions** of famous books which they have read. In Western Europe people like to read **comic books** – there are more pictures than text and the story is usually **adventurous** and dynamic. Belgium, France and England are countries where comic books are very popular.

Books can be bought in a **wide range of** bookshops. Some are small and quite **specialised**; others are situated in big shopping centres. People can drink a cup of tea or coffee there and sometimes see a presentation of a new book. Bestsellers can also be bought in **newsstands** or supermarkets. It is becoming more and more popular to buy a book **via the Internet** in an Internet bookshop. It is also possible to read a book **in electronic form**; such a book is called an **e-book**.

In England and other countries of Western Europe **publishing companies publish** many more books than in Slovakia. People buy them in **mega stores** or small specialised bookshops (e. g. children's bookshops). In general, people in our country do not buy many books. There are two main reasons for this. The first one is that books are getting more and more expensive and people **cannot afford to buy** many of them. This also **leads to illegal photocopying**, mainly **among** students who often copy **textbooks**. Slovak **libraries lack finances** to be able to provide better services and a wider range of books to readers.

The second reason why people in Slovakia and other countries do not buy many books is that they do not read so much anymore. There are several reasons why there is a **crisis of reading** nowadays. People do not look for information in books (such as encyclopedias or textbooks) as much as they used to in the past. They need to save **as much time as possible**. Therefore, they prefer to **look up the information on the Internet**. Instead of reading good fiction, they watch films. Reading a book takes days or weeks, watching a film just one or two hours. People do not need to concentrate so much; they do not need to imagine things. Everything is ready for them on the screen. Moreover, teenagers prefer the interactive virtual reality of computer games. They **participate in** the game, **take action**, feel what the heroes feel. Adults read more and more **magazines** because **it takes less time** and concentration than reading a book.

To change this negative trend it is very important to develop a good relationship towards reading and literature **from a very young age**. When a positive relationship is developed, books **enrich** our lives. We read **for pleasure**, we train our imagination. Books make us think, **amuse** us and give answers to some questions. A good book is also a pleasant way **to escape** from the real world. When we read a lot, we improve our vocabulary too. People who read enough **express themselves** better.

Some people think that books will **die out** one day. They say that everything will be read in electronic form and people will have less and less time to read books. Others **argue** that reading is a hobby for many people and books are a part of the cultural **heritage** of every nation. That is why they think that the book will never **cease to exist** and is **irreplaceable**.

Every year, the *Swedish Academy* **announces** the *Nobel Prize winners* for literature. Winning the *Nobel Prize* for literature is one of the highest **honours** for a writer. Books by such authors become **widely translated** and sold. The authors get the award from *His Majesty the King of Sweden* during a *Nobel Prize Award Ceremony* in Stockholm. Here are some of the Nobel Prize winners for literature: *Harold Pinter* (2005), *Elfriede Jelinek* (2004), *Seamus Heaney* (1995),

Pablo Neruda (1971), *Samuel Beckett* (1969), *John Steinbeck* (1962), *Ernest Hemingway* (1954).

➤ See also “*Sprievodca dielami anglickej a americkej literatúry*” – in English (*Zuzana Fabianová, Enigma, 2004*)



Questions

1. Why do people read?
2. What is the difference between fiction and non-fiction?
3. Where can you buy books?
4. What do you prefer – a book or a film version?
5. What are your favourite literary genres?
6. Do Slovaks buy enough books?
7. Have you read any bestseller recently?
8. Why is there a crisis of reading nowadays?
9. Do you think that the book will disappear one day?
10. What do you know about the Nobel Prize for literature?



Websites

<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/>
<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/books/>
<http://books.guardian.co.uk/>



Unit 23

IDOLS AND CELEBRITIES

A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become well-known, then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized. ♡ Fred Allen

i Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. Characterise an idol.
2. What kinds of idols do you have?
3. Why do people need idols?

The concept of an **idol** [Greek: eidolon = "appearance"] **appears** very often in religion and philosophy. Several philosophers, such as *Aristotle, Plato, Bacon* and *Nietzsche*, developed concepts that they have called idols. In **ancient Greece** and **Rome** people had their "heroes" whom they **considered semi-Gods**.

A **hero (male)** or **heroine (female)** is an extraordinary character that represents the most important **traits valued** by its culture. The hero is **idealised** and often **possesses superhuman characteristics**. These **enable** him or her to **perform extraordinary acts** for which he or she is famous.

We can say that an **ideal** person does not exist because every individual **possesses** both positive and negative traits. We try to develop the positive traits and **suppress** the negative ones. Every society and every individual believes in a certain **hierarchy of values**. Love, health, **faith**, family and friendship are usually among the top values. Some people consider money and career the most important ones. A **certain** hierarchy of values is important for a good relationship.

In modern history, we often speak about heroes. Every country has important **personalities** in their history who become idols for many generations. Sometimes they even become one of the symbols of the country. They often include politicians and artists. Being a **war hero** is often connected with an unusual or violent death. These people are **worshipped** because they have died for the ideas they believed in, **defending** their country, fighting for peace. They saved peoples' lives and **ensured** peace for many generations. They are **commemorated** at war **anniversaries**.

Heroes are also people who have difficult or challenging jobs, such as **volunteers** in times of war or **natural catastrophes**, **rescuers**, **fire-fighters**, soldiers or doc-

tors. The qualities we admire include **courage**, talent, energy, charm, a **sense of humour** etc.

Every year, we hear about people who have saved somebody's life or did some other **brave** act that needed a lot of courage. They saved people who nearly **drowned**, or were **injured in a car accident**, they gave blood or performed a very difficult **surgery**. In our country, every year, one of these heroes is awarded for "the bravest act of the year".

During **adolescence**, young people often search for a **unique** identity. At this age, sport players, rock stars and film and television performers (e. g. reality show stars) become **role models** for them. Teenagers often wish to be like their chosen role model. In recent times, idols in popular culture became very popular. They have **achieved great popularity** through publicity in the mass media. (The MTV music channel is one of the channels that have helped many stars become idols.) Idols are **well-known** in society and **receive attention** from a large number of people. They are usually young and always look good and **stylish**. They have their own fashion designers and stylists. Their popularity does not usually last a very long time. They are parts of a marketing **campaign** which ensures that the mass media regularly inform the **public** about idols' lives. This type of information is not always **based on reality** and is often **made up**. Role models are often **criticised**.

Pop Idol is the most famous talent **contest** to find the best new young singer or pop idol in the country. It combines the traditional talent show with some aspects of a reality television programme. **Viewers vote** for their idols by mobile phone **text messages**. These types of idols have a great **influence** on people of a certain age. Young people try to **resemble** them by copying the way they look and behave. Teenagers often find their idols in reality shows. Reality show stars are "pseudo-idols" which means they are not real idols. They are often **overestimated** and **admired** for no real reasons.

Most of us admire people who are **not at all** famous but are **ordinary**. **Still**, they are idols for us because they represent certain human traits that we admire and often do not possess. Our parents, grandparents, siblings or friends are idols for us. When we are children, we admire them because they always help us or **because of** their profession. When we grow up, we admire them because they are not afraid to fight against difficulties in their lives, they help other people or **simply** always have a smile on their faces. Without realising it, any of us might be a hero for somebody who respects us for a certain quality.

Apart from real, existing heroes there are also **fictional** heroes – heroes from books, films or plays. Book characters often become idols admired by generations of readers. Every national literature has such idols. When a book is filmed, they can become film heroes. In modern movies, many heroes are **charismatic** and are **adored** by viewers. Women like handsome, brave male heroes; men like attractive female heroes. In some films, heroes are ordinary people who try to **overcome obstacles** in their lives and often change during the story. People can **identify with** them because they are realistic and they **remind** them of their own lives. Through them

characters they can understand life better. Some heroes, mostly in science fiction or action films, possess superhuman characteristics. This is very attractive for children and the young. There are heroes who are very violent and consider **violence** a way to solve all problems. Adults criticise violent heroes from the movies and computer games saying that violence has a very negative **impact** on their children. They can easily identify themselves with these heroes and start to **behave** in a similar way. Many **crimes** have been **committed on the basis of** such films.

➤ *See also* Unit 1 Family, Unit 15 Mass media, Unit 16 The Young and Their World

? Questions

1. What human traits do you consider negative?
2. What traits do you admire?
3. Who are war heroes?
4. Characterise a typical idol of popular culture.
5. What is a talent contest?
6. Why are reality show stars idols for some young people?
7. Do you admire ordinary people?
8. Who are fictional heroes?
9. Do you think that some crimes are committed because of films?
10. How could you become a hero?



Websites

<http://www.popidol.co.uk/>

http://videoeta.com/person_home.html



Unit 24

ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

England and America are two countries separated by a common language.

George Bernard Shaw

Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

- 1 What is the difference between a foreign language and a mother tongue?
- 2 How do Slovaks and Americans differ in their lifestyle?
- 3 How would you describe a typical Englishman?

English is one of the **widespread** languages in the world. It is the first language (**mother tongue**) for most **inhabitants** of the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. There is a great number of countries where English is spoken as a second language, for example by **immigrants**. For tourists, who come to an English-speaking country, English is a foreign language. The English language has become a **lingua franca** – a language of international communication in business, science or politics. English is used in many different countries in the world. These countries share the same language (or **variations**), but every one of them has its own traditions and habits.

Great Britain **comprises** *England, Wales and Scotland*. Together with *Northern Ireland* it forms **the United Kingdom**. It includes four nations: the English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish people. They all differ in their way of life, customs, values and traditions.

The **British** people are said to be reserved in **manners**, dress and speech. Other nations often say that they are conservative and **stick to traditions**. They are famous for their **politeness, self-discipline, reliability** and for their specific **sense of humour**. They never seem **to be in a hurry** and are seldom **agitated**. These **features** of British manners are often seen as typical, but it does not mean that all the British people are actually like that. Many British people are not conservative at all. There are big differences in manners between individuals **within** one nation.

On the other hand, there are habits and customs which characterise many British people. It is true that the British people rarely **shake hands** when they meet, except when being introduced to someone **for the first time**. It is also true that Brit-

ish people are very fond of animals and sport. Football is the national sport and it is being shown on television almost every day. They are also fond of cricket, rugby, golf, tennis and horse racing, to **mention** the most popular ones. Most of the British people like to spend their summer holidays **at the seaside**, often in Spain or France.

Many British women work now, rather than stay at home and **do housework**. The role of women has changed and many British women have their own careers. The husband and the wife **share the housework** and also the responsibility for their children's education. Young people in Britain have their individual interests, their own lifestyle and a special **youth culture**. Those who leave school at 16 and get their first jobs are already independent. They have their own money to spend on CDs, DVDs, clothes or **entertainment**. Teenagers who stay at school **until the age of 18**, preparing to go to college or university, often take a job in a shop or baby-sit to have some more **pocket money**. Saturday night is the most popular night of the week for going out to parties or to a disco with friends. The cinema is more popular than the theatre with young people.

Scotland is a country where special traditions are kept, such as playing **bagpipes** and wearing **kilts** (typical **knee-length** skirts for both men and women). There are special meals which are prepared only in Scotland. Scotland has many whisky **distilleries** with a long tradition which has made Scottish whisky world-famous. The Scottish people speak various dialects of English or **Gaelic** – their original ancient language.

Wales is rich in culture and history. The Welsh people are known for their love of music and poetry. There are two languages spoken in Wales – English and Welsh, which is a Celtic language and very different from English.

Northern Ireland (also known as *Ulster*) occupies the northern **fifth** of the island of Ireland and is a part of the United Kingdom. Most of the country is **Protestant** and over half of the population is Protestant. **The Republic of Ireland** (also known as *Eire*) is a **sovereign** state and is mostly Catholic. The life of the people and the politics of Northern Ireland has been dominated by religious and economic problems. The Catholic community want Northern Ireland to join **Ireland**, **whereas** the Protestant community want to **remain** part of the UK. Old **hatred** between Protestants and Catholics have been kept alive, with years of **civil unrest** and terrorist attacks by both sides. A **peace agreement** was signed in 1998 but has not brought an end to the violence. The new Catholic-Protestant government, formed in May 2007, will hopefully end more than 30 years of conflict between Protestants and Catholics.

The Irish people are said to be very similar to the Slovaks. They are **hospitable**, friendly, they like music and dancing. Music is their national **passion**. Drinking plays an important part in their culture. Social life concentrates in pubs where music is very common.

The USA is home to more than 300 million people – mostly of European origin but also of Afro-American, Native American, Japanese, Chinese and other origins.

Besides English, which is the **official language**, the people of the USA speak their **minority** and immigrant languages. This means that Spanish **is becoming an increasingly important** language, especially in the southern states.

The image a lot of people have of Americans is based on what they see most often – American tourists. Then they think Americans are **loud**, extremely **self-confident**, dressed in **tasteless** clothes. These **stereotypes** are usually modified when the people **get to know** Americans better. They are seen as open, friendly, hard-working, independent and **self-reliant**. Another image of Americans is the result of the influence of American movies and advertising. They show Americans as rich people, living in **luxurious** houses, spending most of their time at parties and driving their expensive cars. America is a **wealthy** country and Americans enjoy one of the highest **standards of living** in the world. However, there are also high levels of **poverty** in many of the cities.

It is a typical custom to teach children independence from an early age. The car is seen as a **necessity** and each adult member of a typical American family has his/her own. Most Americans drive to work and **high school** students and **college** students **drive** to school. Americans like travelling and they often **drive long distances** through the country, especially during holidays to visit their friends and relatives.

Americans do not usually stay in the same town all their lives. They like to move. It is not unusual for families to **move house** or go to live in another town or state more than **once every ten years**.

In recent **decades**, Americans have started to take a greater care of their health. They do some sport, eat healthier food, smoke less and drink less alcohol. Smoking is **banned** in public places in several major cities.

English is used within many international organisations, **although** it is only one of the many official languages of the European Union. The role of the European Union has **increased** in the last few years. Since January 1st 2007, the European Union has twenty-seven full members. Although the EU has made travel, study and business easier, some small nations are afraid of losing their identity in a united Europe. Some politicians, on the other hand, **are calling for** a United States of Europe. Many people think that with so many **diverse** cultures this **seems unlikely to happen** in the near future.

• See also Unit 3 Sports and Games, Unit 4 Housing, Unit 8 Education, Unit 17 Food, Unit 20 Towns and Places

More about history, geography, population, economy and systems of governments of THE UNITED KINGDOM (England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland), THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND, THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND can be found on page 337 (Additional texts).

More information about THE EUROPEAN UNION can be found on page 353.

? Questions

1. Why is English a widespread language?
2. Which countries does Great Britain comprise?
3. Which countries form the United Kingdom?
4. What do people say about the British people?
5. Describe the lifestyle of young British people.
6. What do you know about the Republic of Ireland?
7. What is the origin of people living in the USA?
8. What do people say about the Americans?
9. How are Americans usually presented in American movies and advertising?
10. Describe the lifestyle of an average American family.

A Write the nationalities to the following countries.

Example: South Africa – South African

1. Canada – _____
2. England – _____
3. Ireland – _____
4. Scotland – _____
5. the USA – _____
6. Wales – _____
7. Australia – _____
8. New Zealand – _____
9. Slovakia – _____
10. Hungary – _____

B Test your knowledge in this quiz about English-speaking countries. There are six incorrect facts. Find them and write their corrections in the spaces provided. Check the information in additional texts on page 337.

- a) England, Wales and Scotland form Great Britain.
- b) The United Kingdom comprises England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- c) Queen Elizabeth II has actually little real political power.
- d) The UK constitution is written and its rules are codified.
- e) The Republic of Ireland also belongs to the United Kingdom.
- f) The official languages in Ireland are Irish and English.



Unit 25

SLOVAKIA – MY HOMELAND

Patriotism is your conviction that this country is superior to all other countries because you were born in it. ★ George Bernard Shaw



Before reading the text, discuss the following questions in class.

1. Which places in Slovakia are definitely worth seeing?
2. How would you describe a traditional Slovak person?
3. What needs to be done to make Slovakia more attractive for foreign tourists?

The Slovak Republic is an independent state situated in Central Europe. It is **bordered** in the west by the Czech Republic, in the north by Poland, in the east by the Ukraine and in the south by Hungary and Austria. The borders are mostly natural, made by rivers (the Moravia, the Danube) and mountains (**the Carpathians, the High Tatras**). Slovakia is often called “country in the heart of Europe”. **It has much to offer** to tourists who come here to see one of the most **spectacular scenery** in Europe, old towns and cities, **fairytale castles, caves and spa resorts**.

Slovakia is attractive for foreign visitors also **because of** its history. The visitors can **trace** the history of the *Great Moravian Empire* or the *Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy*. They also like to learn about its **recent history**, especially *Slovak National Uprising* or *Czechoslovak Socialist Republic*. They are also very much interested in the **events** of the *Prague Spring* or the so called *Velvet Revolution* of November 1989. Nowadays, they visit an independent country which is a member of the European Union. **Remarkable** historical development, beautiful scenery and hospitable people make Slovakia an attractive tourist destination.

There are many interesting places to visit in Slovakia. There are several national parks and **protected regions**, such as the *High Tatras* – the highest mountains of the country – *the Low Tatras, the Little Fatras, the Great Fatras, Slovak Paradise* and others. **The High Tatras** is situated in the north of Slovakia and creates the natural border between Slovakia and Poland. The highest **peak**, *Gerlachovský štít* (2 655 m), is situated in the middle of the whole massif and it is **visible from far and wide**. The eastern part of the High Tatras is dominated by the peak *Lomnický štít* (2 632 m) and the western, by the peak *Kriváň* (2 494 m). With its **natural beauties**, this area attracts many tourists throughout the year. The High Tatras is famous for

its numerous valleys which are largely the results of **glacial** activity. The most frequently visited lake is *Štrbské pleso* situated **at the height of** 1 355 metres. It **owes its popularity** not only to the wonderful **views** of the **surrounding** mountain peaks but also to an excellent climate. For tourists interested in older architecture there is *Starý Smokovec*, one of the oldest **settlements** of the High Tatras. Together with the **neighbouring** *Nový Smokovec* and *Horný Smokovec*, they are parts of the town of *Vysoké Tatry*. The *High Tatras National Park* is Slovakia's largest.

Slovak Paradise is a romantic and **picturesque** region located in the northeast. There are numerous rock windows, caves, **roaring waterfalls** but also **vast plains** with fascinating views of the area. *Dobšinská ľadová jaskyňa*, located in the western part of this **valley**, is the oldest ice cave in Europe. It is one of the most attractive places for tourists visiting Slovak Paradise.

Other places attractive for tourists include the *Spiš Castle*, the largest medieval castle of Central Europe and *Vlkolíneč*, a mountain village. Both of them have been included in the **UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List**. The most visited towns are *Bratislava*, the capital, *Banská Štiavnica*, *Banská Bystrica*, both in the central Slovakia and *Košice* in the east. Many **domestic** and foreign tourists say that the infrastructure and the services in Slovakia are still not very developed.

Slovaks are **proud of** their folklore tradition which is well-developed. In every region, there exist many folklore groups. Various traditions connected to **Easter** or Christmas are still kept, especially in the villages. There are many typical Slovak restaurants serving traditional Slovak **cuisine**. The most typical food is *bryndzové halušky* (**gnocchi** with sheep cheese) and a typical alcoholic drinks include *horovička* (**juniper gin**) and beer.

The lifestyle of people in Slovakia has changed radically after the **fall of communism**. **Transition to a market economy** has changed the structure of the society. Years of life in a communist society and a **sudden** arrival of democracy have both influenced the way of thinking and **behaviour** of Slovaks.

In May 2004, Slovakia became a member of the European Union, together with the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, **Latvia**, **Lithuania**, Estonia, Cyprus and Malta. The Slovak language became one of the official languages of the European Union. This **membership** has influenced the political and economical life of the country **considerably**. Many Slovak companies and institutions participate in various **EU funded** projects concerning environment, regional development, education, trade and other spheres. Many Slovak students get involved in exchange programmes and study abroad. In spite of the fact that several EU countries have **imposed** job entry **restrictions** on Slovaks, a lot of doctors, programmers, engineers, ~~researchers~~ and others have decided to work abroad.

Slovaks are said to be hospitable, hard-working and willing to help others. However, other nations often say that Slovaks **underestimate** themselves. Foreigners, **on the other hand**, appreciate the close relationships Slovaks have within their families. Slovak parents help their children a lot even when they grow up. In the past it was common that the children lived together with their parents even after they

grew up and had their own jobs. This often had a financial reason. These days, more and more young couples prefer to live alone rather than to remain in the home of their parents. A lot of them decide to **take a mortgage** from a bank to buy a flat or a house. They pay it back in **monthly payments**. In the past, Slovaks used to build their houses themselves, nowadays they rather **have them built**.

Slovaks are also famous for being patriots, which means they have a positive attitude to their country. In spite of that there have been several **waves of emigration throughout the history** of Slovakia and many Slovaks live and work **elsewhere**.

➤ *See also* Unit 20 Towns and Places

More about the city of BRATISLAVA can be found on page 351.

More about THE EUROPEAN UNION can be found on page 353.



Questions

1. Why is Slovakia called "country in the heart of Europe"?
2. Which Slovak borders are natural?
3. Why is Slovakia an attractive tourist destination?
4. Which events in the history of Slovakia do the foreigners find most interesting?
5. Which places are included in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List?
6. What traditions do the Slovaks still keep?
7. What changes did the transition to a market economy bring?
8. What do foreign nations think of Slovaks? Do you think it is true?
9. Describe the relationships within Slovak families.
10. What does it mean being a patriot?



Websites

<http://www.heartofeurope.co.uk/>
<http://www.slovakia.org>
<http://www.slovensko.com>